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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

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F. R. LEAVIS DENYS THOMPSON

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EVALUATIONS (III)

ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

DISCUSSION of Dr. Whitehead is an unenviable task: he is both prolific and encyclopædic, and from close at hand it is difficult to decide even what the nature of his importance is. In one and the same book—as for instance in his last, *Adventures of Ideas*[1]—he presents speculations on history, sociology, politics, religion, together with metaphysics and physics. Admittedly in some of these he is indisputably expert, while in others he is as frankly amateur: that hardly affords a ground for their separate consideration. Whether rightly or not, they are presented as of a piece and, unless I am mistaken, are widely accepted as such. Even the many variations in tone adopted by Dr. Whitehead—at times strictly analytic, at others he is enthusiastic, tenderly affective, hortatory, while he can rarely resist the temptation to turn an aphorism—these many variations, which might be expected to arouse distrust, tend rather to win him confidence. For the scientist, on non-scientific matters, is as susceptible of emotion as the Welsh miner ; while the miner in his turn, who admires the expert, is tolerant of the wildest theories that are soberly expounded. Dr. Whitehead's work therefore must be considered as a whole. And if it were not so, of course, it would hardly come up for consideration here. Certain portions would submit themselves for judgment to fellow-experts, the rest would float off into the Limbo at the back of the moon. But they obstinately refuse to do so.

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[1]C.U.P., 12/6d.

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That certain of its qualities might be expected to arouse distrust is particularly unfortunate because, as even his admirers would admit, Dr. Whitehead's work is such that it calls for the maximum of forbearance in perusal. He can write extremely well, as I shall insist ; but it is notorious that he does not always do so. And the construction of some of his books—of for instance *Process and Reality,* which in many respects is the most important—is of a kind that it is impossible to read them continuously. Cross-references have to be made, and pairs of passages to be read and re-read in the hope that one member will shed light on the other, at the same time as the other sheds light on it. The point is not that this happens occasionally, for with metaphysics under discussion it is liable to do so even in the best-planned books: but rather that the books seem planned in order that it shall happen. Thereby, the difficulty of choosing texts for an investigation intended to lead to a conclusion about the whole is very much increased. In any case, owing to the number and wide variety of possible texts, it was bound to be great.

It must however be faced, and for primary discussion it is perhaps easiest to take the encyclopædism which has already been mentioned. Whatever our judgment upon it now, it issued from something which, in Dr. Whitehead's earlier work, seemed to promise well. This is best seen by contrast with the work of other mathematicians and physicists who have written on philosophy. Although they do not confine themselves to mathematics and physics—although indeed they attempt to include in their survey as wide a territory as ever Whitehead did—their work does not impress as encyclopædic, but rather the contrary. They are unduly narrow. Whatever problems they approach, they remain predominantly the exponents of a specialized science: they close their eyes to data which would not present themselves to a mathematician or a scientist as such. In some respects this turns to their advantage: for by sufficient limitation of data it is always possible to achieve clarity, and clarity has great persuasive power. However attained, and whether or not worthy of attainment, it tends to be taken as a sign of competence. Further, they are able to add to their attractions that of the appearance of paradox: Professor Eddington's airman who flew with the speed of light, or Mr. Russell's millionaire with an insatiable passion for buying shoes

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and socks, both with remarkable consequences, are examples of what I mean. The paradoxes arise in this way. In mathematics and physics, which deal with abstractions, abstract entities only need be posited to complete a theoretic system. In what is now almost a technical phrase, they ' do the trick.' As often as not, however, they are given the names of things which are not abstract, or not quite so abstract ; and deliberately or through oversight are confused with these. The concrete counterparts are then assumed to do the trick, or more surprising tricks, in a concrete world: the airman enjoys eternal youth, the millionaire is able to count his shoes but not his socks, and the audience is suitably impressed. By this time it is thoroughly convinced that its mind is necessarily either in a state of coma, and therefore incapable of criticism ; or in that state of amazement and wonder—and therefore equally incapable of criticism—which is appropriate to a performance at Maskelyne and Devant's.

Throughout his work Dr. Whitehead has insisted that this is not true. Common sense, based on common experience, deserves he says to be encouraged and not rebuffed. Above all it should be invited to control the ' results ' of the specialized scientist. I quote him at length on the matter. In the Vanuxem Lectures, delivered at Princeton in 1929, he says: ' We have to discriminate between the weight to be given to scientific opinion in the selection of its methods, and its trustworthiness in formulating judgments of the understanding. The slightest scrutiny of the history of natural science shows that current scientific opinion is nearly infallible in the former case, and is invariably wrong in the latter case. The man with a method good for the purposes of his dominant interests, is a pathological case in respect to his wider judgment on the co-ordination of this method with a more complete experience. Priests and scientists, statesmen and men of business, philosophers and mathematicians, are all alike in this respect. We all start by being empiricists. But our empiricism is confined within our immediate interests. The more clearly we grasp the intellectual analysis of a way regulating procedure for the sake of those interests, the more decidedly we reject the inclusion of evidence which refuses to be immediately harmonized with the method before us. Some of the major disasters of mankind have been produced by the narrowness of men with a good

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methodology.' Passages to this effect are by no means rare in Dr. Whitehead's work.

Therefore even in matters which might be considered domestic to physics he makes an appeal to the common experience of mankind: in his attack on the fundamental conceptions of classical physics, for example, he bases himself partly upon this, as well as upon the advances in modern experimental knowledge. When he proceeds to the attack upon formulations which, for the majority of experts, have satisfactorily replaced those of the 17th century, he bases himself almost wholly upon it. In the Einsteinian interpretation of nature, coincidence plays a great part: simultaneity, for example, is said to be the coincident arrival at the same point in space-time of rays each from a different source of light, and measurement to be the coincidence of measures. Of this last Whitehead remarks: ' No one counts coincident inches. Counting is essentially concerned with non-coincident straight segments.' And of the first: ' Light-signals are very important in our lives, but still we cannot but feel that the signal-theory somewhat exaggerates their position. The very meaning of simultaneity is made to depend upon them. There are blind people and dark cloudy nights, and neither blind people nor people in the dark are deficient in a sense of simultaneity. They know quite well what it means to bark both their shins at the same time.' And then, proceeding to a further point, which is easily understood: ' In fact the determination of simultaneity in this way is never made, and if it could be made would not be accurate ; for we live in the air and not *in vacuo*.'

But, as was apparent from the quotation, Dr. Whitehead's main concern is not that common sense shall have an influence within physics, as that physics shall not have a warping influence upon common sense. In the 17th century it was allowed to dictate an anti-R.S.P.C.A. attitude, in the 19th it had a share in the establishment of an attitude which was largely anti-R.S.P.C.C. It was qualified, and should have been allowed, to do neither. At the present time, in spite of its discredit in expert circles, classical physics still shares in the government of the ideas of a large number of men ; the other share is assumed by remnants of the Christian tradition: hence a ' radical inconsistency ' in intellectual matters, ' which accounts for much that is half-hearted

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in our civilization.' Further, that physics or any other science should be allowed a life apart, as it were an enclave of some foreign power within the domain of human reason, is 'an attack on systematic thought': such an attack is 'treason to civilization.' Therefore the list of Dr. Whitehead's works, which is headed by investigations which are purely physical, ends with studies which are almost as purely metaphysical. That is, he does not overlook, as was the practice of his predecessors, the traditional disputes between metaphysics and physics—'scientific faith,' in his own words, 'removing the philosophic mountain'—but endeavours to dig the mountain out of the way. The endeavour is heroic.

Whatever its success it imparts to his work two qualities, the one perhaps not so remarkable as the other, but each sufficient to explain why, as was said above, no views of Dr. Whitehead are quick to 'float off into Limbo.' The first is connected with the aim of his work. For by now he has revealed himself champion of what he calls an 'ultimate rationalism,' of a rationalism that is which, while it admits no limitation of its scope, also allows of none to its responsibilities. A system is to be evolved which will order the evidence, but all the evidence; which will recognize all the specialized disciplines, but allow undue importance to none. Because of the mass of detailed knowledge, human weakness, and then human vanity, have conspired to make comprehensiveness of this sort seem impossible: it is difficult to exaggerate the merit of the man who not only asserts the contrary, but does what he can to prove the assertion by his practice. The second quality is a matter of style. With his persistent candour, and constant appeal to normal experience, Dr. Whitehead frequently succeeds in being irresistibly convincing. I am not referring to his aphorisms, which tend to be quoted in and out of season: an aphorism may be of doutbful value, and Dr. Whitehead's long residence in America (the home, I believe, of the Wayside Pulpit) has not done much to improve his taste. I refer rather to something which can extend to paragraphs and to chapters; which may perhaps be seen even in the short extracts I have made. It is a clarity which, unlike that of other physicists and mathematicians, does not result from a sacrifice of substance; and a forcefulness which depends, on the one hand, on the selection for emphasis of implications which are of

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most consequence for most people, and on the other on direct, at times almost colloquial phrasing. If there is illustration, then again it is such as appeals by familiarity rather than dazzles by paradox. Dr. Whitehead may never be entirely free from a hankering after the cheaper graces ; or from a disposition to make his periods too long, his rhythms too commonplace: but in less superficial qualities of economy and of order some of his passages are models of all that good prose should be.

Comprehensiveness however is not encyclopædism ; or encyclopædism, perhaps, is of two different kinds. There is that of Aristotle and Aquinas, and even of Hegel in the *Encyclopædia of the Sciences* ; there is also that of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and of the *Universal Adviser*. In the one, detail is introduced only for the purpose of illustrating subordination, or at least only after subordination has been made ; in the other, it is introduced largely for its own sake. Dr. Whitehead no doubt always strives after the one ; what he attains is frequently the other—hence the hesitations of the first paragraph of this paper. Further, though he can write in the way just described, often his style is very different indeed. It is crowded with neologisms, jostling with terms so familiar that their connotation is doubtful, and with which the relations of the neologisms are difficult to determine ; in the same sentence the same notion appears, it would seem, both as abstract noun and as adjective, occasionally too as verb and even as adverb; far from being direct, it has to be read many times before its intention can even be glimpsed. How Dr. Whitehead can acknowledge such a style as tolerable ; how he can accept one encyclopædism for the other, is a problem by no means easy of solution. A hint may perhaps be found in those passages in which he is writing at his best. At times, these are colloquial ; colloquialism frequently has as origin or as companion qualities which are not so pleasant—overhastiness, for example, and insensibility to not too obvious, but not unimportant detail. Take the following sentences from the quotation I gave from the Vanuxem Lectures: ' A man with a method good for the purposes of his dominant interests, is a pathological case . . . Priests and scientists, statesmen and men of business, philosophers and mathematicians, are all alike in this respect.' The main purpose of the context, that suitability of a method for the attainment of

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a limited end is not thereby suitability for the attainment of the end with limitations removed, is quite clear, and as sound as it is clear. But the series of examples quoted is a little startling. It was to be expected that priests, scientists and mathematicians would occur ; but can the philosopher be co-ordinated with them? Or has the man of business a function of equal dignity with that of a statesman? The question answers itelf. The statesman, *qua* statesman, is not concerned to rival the man of business or even, except on conditions which he himself has determined, to supplement his activities: rather to define them. And similarly, philosophy and mathematics are not two areas lying apart from each other in the same plane, but rather mathematics, along with science, forms part of the region subject to philosophy. That therefore both statesman and man of business, or both philosopher and mathematician, have interests which can be described as ' immediate ' or ' dominating ' does not in the least imply that these interests have anything but the merest accident in common ; still less that they share in something obviously harmful. The adjective ' immediate ' is indeed misleading as applied to them all: for it suggests limitation in the cases where, by definition of the interests, limitation is impossible. There is overhastiness here, resulting in over-statement: in his anxiety to show that he has an open mind (an anxiety whose merits have been stressed), Whitehead may have laid himself open to the charge that his mind is confused. Confusion, or lack of due order, is the mark of the wrong kind of encyclopædism ; and it rests on insensibility, if not to the fact that distinctions have been made, then to their exact nature and implication.

Sapientis est gubernare, as it says at the beginning of the *Summa*: if Whitehead fails to govern, then his wisdom, which here means his metaphysics, should come up for examination. But that is best postponed as long as possible ; and there is the preliminary consideration that, if weakness in metaphysics may produce confusion, insensibility may be not without responsibility for a weakness in metaphysics. For this science is to a great extent its own history: it largely depends, that is, upon the appreciation of factors which, as they are not expressed in words, are easily overlooked. Appeal must be made to the past ; but at the same time note should be made of the subtle difference between

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the voices of the centuries, even when they utter the same words. No fault can be found with Dr. Whitehead for failing to appeal to the past. When, however, he places one of his doctrines under the simultaneous patronage of Plato, the scholastics, John Locke and Bradley, it becomes extremely doubtful whether he is doing so in the right way. These philosophers have some element in common which is perhaps underrated, but surely their combined patronage of anything cannot be more than merely honorary. Or, if more, then it is probable they are being misrepresented. About Plato in particular Whitehead makes a number of surprising statements: allowing him the title of the 'greatest metaphysician,' he says for instance, that he is also 'the poorest systematic thinker'; and John Locke he calls 'the British analogue to Plato.' 'Then he is a very British Plato,' it seems impossible not to reply. We are here in the domain of specialists and must speak with diffidence: the conclusion, however, seems likely that, as we have already seen him standardize the roles of philosophers, business men and statesmen, so here Whitehead is standardizing the centuries. He may, of course, be reducing them to the right standard; but if so, it is not because of any historical understanding but by divine favour.

The question can be settled by enquiring what the standard is. We need consider only the remote background of his work; which, though his doctrines have developed greatly in his successive books, remains much the same in each. I take for simplicity's sake an early one, *The Concept of Nature*. Here the term 'nature' is used advisedly: it indicates not the whole, but a portion of reality. Accordingly Whitehead repeats that his subject is not reality as such, and that he is not writing metaphysics. This is proper, for no profit could result from the assumption, explicit or otherwise, that the part is what is essential to the whole, or in any way representative of it. Further, he goes on to announce what is in appearance a satisfactory programme: 'for natural philosophy,' he says, 'everything perceived is in nature,' or in other terms, 'all our perceptions are in the same boat, and must be treated in the same principle.' That is, he is clear, it would seem, that not only is he not writing metaphysics, but also that neither is he writing psychology or epistemology. Of a piece with this is the celebrated chapter on 'the bifurcation of nature,' in which the theory of

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secondary qualities or (as he calls them) ' psychic additions to nature ' is expressly repudiated. It seems, if I may adopt phrases as colloquial as his, that he is going to cut the epistemological cackle and, first after many who hesitate, get down to business. But this pleasant impression does not last for long. It receives a first shock from the discovery that, if Whitehead disclaims the discussion of metaphysics, he does so not on the ground that metaphysics is a task with wider reference than the one he has in hand, but rather one incompatible with it, indeed destructive of it. ' Recourse to metaphysics,' he says, ' is like throwing a match into a powder-magazine: it blows up the whole arena.' At first this is a puzzle: a discussion of general principles may limit the validity of conclusions drawn from a discussion about principles which are more limited, but (unless ' general ' is a word of no meaning) cannot annihilate them. It continues to be puzzling until, from scattered phrases and from further remarks, at first sight equally strange, it becomes clear that by metaphysics Dr. Whitehead does not mean what we had supposed him to mean: for him it is not—or at least, it is not always—the science of reality as a whole, within which physics naturally falls, but rather the science, co-ordinate with physics, which deals with that part of reality which physics neglects. That is, it deals with the mind, and is but psychology under a more impressive name. The puzzle is now solved: for if, in the middle of a treatise on physics psychological principles are introduced, what was a public world of more or less stable objects becomes an assemblage of private and fleeting sense-impressions: the arena is indeed blown up, and the physicist has nowhere to set up his instruments—he has, in fact, no instruments to set up. But there is also another consequence: if metaphysics has indentified itself with psychology, it no longer performs its function of guarantor of the independence of the sciences, of that of physics, for example, from psychology. Psychology can now invade the ground of physics with impunity, for there is no longer a means of calling it to order. In spite of the chapter on the bifurcation, in spite of the programme quoted above, this is what happens in *The Concept of Nature*. We do not read long before we find Dr. Whitehead talking of the ' indeterminateness of sense-awareness,' of its ' crude deliverances ' which need to be revised. By what standard crude? we are tempted to ask. But

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it is hardly worth while doing so ; for by now it is obvious that all our perceptions of nature are not in the same boat ; that some of them are in a much larger boat, in fact in a liner ; and can rescue the others.

It is also obvious with what voice the ages are going to speak for Whitehead. It was Descartes who divided the world into two independent halves, the one of matter or extension, the other of mind or thought ; so that, if physics is to be charged with a full account of the one, for metaphysics there is left only the other. The voice is that of the 17th century. Of his admiration for this century Whitehead makes no secret, and it has often been remarked upon. John Dewey, I believe, said of Whitehead's work that it represents the ' conquest of the 17th century over the 20th.' Now, without having any particular fondness for the 20th it is possible to regret that, if it is to be conquered, this should be by the 17th, of all centuries. Undoubtedly a brilliant age ; but hardly a wise one. As Whitehead himself remarks, ' wisdom is proportional to the width of evidence made effective in the final self-determination.' The 17th century took as its task that of revolt, and prided itself upon the exclusion from its determinations such evidence as it knew had been approved by the past. It was insensitive, for example, to most that there is of value in Aristotle—one only needs to remember the casual remarks about him made by Bacon or Hobbes or Locke. Whitehead seems similarly insensitive, and greatly to his disadvantage. For his greatest philosophical difficulty is the notion of substance as it presented itself to Descartes ; yet of the role of ὕλη as subject, and of the subtle and varied relations between subject and attribute which that makes possible, he seems to know little or nothing. But this is, comparatively speaking, a minor point. For there is one way in which loyalty to Descartes has been detrimental to all his followers ; to Whitehead, who of all is most strangely loyal, it seems almost fatal. It depends upon the complete separation of the world of extension from that of thought, the consequence of which must be that the world of extension is as such impenetrable to thought, that is, essentially unknowable. ' What is unknowable,' Whitehead himself remarks, ' is unknown ' ; and adds in a note, ' this doctrine is a paradox '— ' to cautious philosophers.' If, in spite of this irony, he can be shown to behave as a true successor of Descartes in that he still

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makes use of ' unknowables'; if, as I think will be shown, he makes use of them to an unprecedented extent: the source of much of the confusion in his work will be made clear. There will also be obvious the reason for his second, that is his objectionable, style.

Let us, then, examine his metaphysics. Substance, as conceived by Descartes and the classical physicists, is the source of grave problems in connection with perception and causation. It is supposed to be a ' bit of matter ' confined to one spot ; whereas, if perceived or causing, it would seem to be effective at more spots than one. As Whitehead does not investigate the notion of substance in pre-Cartesian days, he is forced upon his own invention. He says there are no ' bits of matter,' but what he calls ' events,' ' occasions,' ' entities ' or ' concrescences.' These are all names for the same sort of thing, which is the only real sort of thing. It depends largely on a relation which is neither perception nor causation, but similar to both, and which he calls ' prehension ': this he describes variously as a ' being affected by,' or ' envisaging of,' or ' being nourished by,' or ' having a feeling of.' According to the nature of its object, it is either physical or mental ; if mental it is not necessarily conscious, in fact, is very rarely so. A physical prehension has as object an actual event, not however in its role as event: for an event has full reality and independent existence, and comes into being and perishes ; while an object is immortal, but can exist only as a prehension in an event. As prehended, therefore, an event gains immortality, but it is not prehended in its fullness. The object of a mental prehension is an eternal object: this is very like a universal such as ' red ' or ' green,' and can exist only in entities, either in those around us, or in God. Every event has prehensive relations with every other event, and its ' real constitution ' is what it prehends of the others. That is why it is called a ' concrescence '—because the whole universe grows together in it. What at a high stage of an event's development is called ' perception ' is thus merely a domestic affair: it is perceiving something that is already within, and the problem of perception, for Whitehead, disappears. The same may be said of that of causation.

If prehension is a ' being affected by,' it would seem then that each entity is what the rest of the universe does to it. But that entity itself is part of the rest of the universe for some other

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entity, and obviously there is a difficulty here. If two drunken men can support each other, that is because, in case of ultimate necessity, each can stand on his own legs ; they could not support each other if neither had a leg to stand on. A universe of mere relativity, that is, is impossible. Accordingly Whitehead's events, in addition to their prehensions or affections, have a unity or individuality. Not only does each prehend the universe, but does so from its own point of view. It ' individualizes ' the universe—makes it different, throughout its extent, from what it would have been had the event not existed. We can therefore say, not only that the event is what the universe does to it, but also that it is what it does to the universe. Can, however, both these statements be simultaneously significant? And how, without disruption of the universe, can all events be making each a separate difference throughout it? These further difficulties, says Whitehead, will be seen to be non-existent, if there is taken into account another character of the universe which, equally with the facts of causation and perception, has tended to be neglected by classical physics.

' Our knowledge of nature,' we are told, ' is an experience of activity, or passage ' ; and again, ' what is real is the transition of things.' The universe, in short, is not static, but a Heracleitan one of flux. The notion of flux demands care: we are used to think of it as in time, whereas for Whitehead it would be truer to say that time is in it. Time, that is, is a highly elaborate intellectual abstraction from flux ; and whereas time is not atomic, flux is. There are minimal ' slabs of time,' or durations, shorter than which nothing in the way of flux can exist. Each event has its duration with which it is born, within which it is active, and with which it perishes. As it defines its duration, it necessarily remains the same throughout it ; that nevertheless does not prevent it from ' being in a state of process ' or from developing. It develops from the stage at which it is ' what the universe does to it '—at which its ' inheritance ' from the past is most prominent—to that at which it is ' what is done to the universe,' at which what is most prominent is its legacy to the future. This notion of process without change is difficult, and Whitehead has recourse to strange expressions, such as that of ' feelings aiming at their feeler ' or of ' the subject inhering in the process of its own production ' ; and he speaks of final causes and pre-established harmonies as

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operating within durations. The underlying metaphor is no doubt biological. By it he removes one of the difficulties of the previous paragraph ; the other disappears with the provision that, within a duration, no events have direct prehensions of one another. Indirectly they are related, because they have much of their past in common ; but apart from this past an event during its brief existence is free to make of the universe what it pleases. The question why it should please to make one alteration rather than another brings us to the last and most difficult part of the system.

According to the number of prehensions which enter into the constitution of an entity it is more or less rich. A well-intentioned entity employs its brief period of freedom to make itself as rich as possible, to increase, in Whitehead's technical term, its final ' satisfaction.' In doing so it performs not only a private but a public duty, for at the same time it increases the inheritance which the entities which are to be its successors will receive from it. What however of the doctrine, dictated as we have seen by the facts of perception and causation, that each entity prehends the whole universe? By it degrees of satisfaction would seem to be excluded. Whitehead explains that, so far as physical prehensions are concerned, they vary greatly in their strength: while some are vivid, others are vague, trivial and submerged. And mental prehensions can be of two kinds, either positive or negative. If negative they are not so much feelings as their exclusion ; by them an entity refuses to admit an eternal object into its constitution. Obviously some provision of this kind was necessary, for not all eternal objects, green and red for example, are compatible ; yet it is not at first sight clear how a ' not being affected by ' can be a species of ' being affected by.' For Whitehead, however, a negative prehension is a definite attitude taken up by an entity to an eternal object, and is therefore in some way a bond between the two. If it is admitted to be such, varying degrees of satisfaction among the entities immediately become possible. And also it becomes clear that an entity can never attain what might be called the fullest satisfaction. To encompass the inclusion of a certain eternal object, or of a certain set of such, it must accept the exclusion of others. Thus, in its period of freedom, it must choose ; wherein lies the moral responsibility of entities. The alternatives among which it must choose it finds laid up in God—an entity

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like the rest, but one which envisages the whole universe and the whole of the possibilities of its development, graded according to their relevance to the inheritance of each entity and to its ambitions. Apparently the richness of these possibilities is inexhaustible ; so that the universe will always find before it opportunities, if not of a greater satisfaction, at least of a satisfaction that is new.

We have spoken of the moral responsibilities of entities, but it must not be assumed that they are therefore conscious. Moral responsibility, not more than mentality (all entities, we have seen, have mental prehensions, that is, a ' mental ' as well as a ' physical pole ') implies consciousness. That is attained only by a few amongst entities, favourably situated and aided by their environment and inheritance, and after very elaborate development. First there must be physical prehensions, giving rise to mental ones concerned with the eternal objects which characterize the objects of the physical prehensions. Then novelty enters: some of the eternal objects exclude others (and there must be decision which of two incompatibles is to be excluded, which retained), some again, by a process called ' reversion,' suggest new eternal objects not in the entities physically prehended, but relevant to the new satisfaction to be produced. Then there is ' integration ' of the various physical feelings of one entity so that they become one feeling, and ' transmutation ' of the integrated feelings each from a member of a society of entities so that they become one feeling of that society. This last is very important, because the only things of which we have perceptual knowledge (when we do come to have it) are societies, that is, groups of entities which have part of their satisfaction in common, and have it because they are members of the society. They are for example ordinary physical objects, such as can preserve their character through time. Next in the development towards consciousness is a reintegration of the transmuted physical feeling with a conceptual feeling, producing what Whitehead calls a ' propositional feeling ': this is of an entity, or of some among a set of entities, as possibly characterized by an eternal object. Finally there is integration once again: of the complex physical feeling with the original physical feeling of the entity or entities which enter into the object of the propositional feeling. A feeling yet more complex results, which has as object the contrast between

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a society as possibly other than it is, and that society as it is. With it consciousness appears, for this is in essence 'the quality inherent in the contrast between Actuality and Ideality.' As may well be realized it flickers up only rarely upon the surface of the sea of events; it irradiates its immediate neighbourhood and no more.

A summary of this kind is of necessity at once curt, and in need of apologies for its length. As it occasionally makes use of Whitehead's own terms, and elsewhere abandons them without hesitation, it is almost as necessarily unfair; for these terms are peculiar to Whitehead, and difficult for another person either to use or to interpret. But that is of less importance as we are to neglect all problems of comparative detail, however fascinating; our sole concern, after the summary as before, is to discover what role the unknowable, and therefore the unknown, plays in Whitehead.

The proportion then of events which achieve consciousness to those which do not is extremely low—how low it is unprofitable to conjecture, but we can safely say that it is much lower than we should naturally expect, both from our normal experience of the world and from the descriptions that are given us of an event. This may not be serious, for what we ordinarily think of as a knower can know a great number of things: it is an adequacy of knowns, rather than of knowers, that it is of primary importance to establish. What then can a single conscious event know? If anything, then something that is real; and what is real is the flow of events, the flow being real only in the events. Can an event have knowledge of other events? Knowledge is by way of prehensions, and events as such are never prehended: it is only as objects that they enter into the constitution of their fellows. But as objects they are no longer subjects, no longer active, that is, and possessed of that 'sheer individuality' or 'absolute self-attainment' in virtue of which alone they were fully real. If by becoming an object they have in a sense gained immortality, in another sense which is the more important here they have perished. Indirectly, however, an event might have knowledge of other events: from its knowledge of itself, for example, it might draw a notion of what reality is, and deduce that other things which it imagines are events are of the same kind. Such a

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deduction would be hazardous ; in this case it happens to be also impossible. For there is the objection that consciousness, according to Whitehead, is a certain complexity in the structure of being. If an entity became conscious of itself, it would thereby alter its own structure—that is, it would no longer be itself. ' No actual entity ' therefore ' can be conscious of its own satisfaction.' But if not of its own, then neither of that of any other event ; and reality would seem to be closed to knowledge. The conclusion is startling, and we may well hesitate to accept it: perhaps, if events as such cannot be known, there may be knowledge of the materials out of which they are built. This suggestion is a desperate one, for an event is an organic whole, an irrefragable unity, and knowledge of it is not merely the sum of what is known of its parts. However, even as such, is it possible? Again the answer is negative. Simple prehensions, whether physical or mental, are as such not known: consciousness is the distant result of their integration and transmutation, in the course of which they enter into new and irrefragable wholes, not to be separated out. And what does transmutation produce? Knowledge, it is said, of societies ; by it, however, these societies, which are ' really ' many, are made to appear as one ; and in any case they are ' objectified,' shorn, that is, of their intrinsic activity.

Can such ' knowledge ' be of great profit? Whitehead, of course, is compelled to maintain that it is ; and often his fundamental argument would appear to be that from it the whole of metaphysics can be extracted, as it were by ' transcendental argument ' : since we have knowledge of such a kind (here that of societies), the universe must be of such a kind as to make that knowledge possible. This is a type of argument whose proper nature is obscure ; we can, I think, neglect it for a more general enquiry into what Whitehead means by knowledge at all. This is a complexity of structure. Let us ask, can such a complexity be knowledge? To which two replies are possible, the one being ' Yes, if you choose to call it so.' But if you do, ' knowledge ' thereby becomes a mere synonym of complexity, and loses most of its usual meaning. A complexity, for example, is merely *of* the things that are combined and is just where it is ; knowledge would seem to be in a way ubiquitous, and is not only *of* the things in my head, but *of* the Great Wall of China, *of* the centre

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of the earth, and *of* the bodies above the moon. By an answer like this Whitehead would, amongst other things, reduce the number of his knowns to that of his knowers, and we have already remarked that this would be undesirable. The great mass of events would remain unexplored, unexplorable ; but of course they are not, and he himself talks a great deal about them. He must therefore give the second type of answer, which is that the particular complexity he has in mind can share in ubiquity, that it can as it were ' overflow ' or—in the metaphor he uses—irradiate. The metaphor invites the challenge: can a complexity irradiate? Notice that this is the proper form of the challenge and not: *does* the complexity irradiate ? We are not as yet sure that such a complexity exists: we are not as it were chemists, merely observing what emerges from an actual situation. As we know, in an experiment the emergence of the most unexpected things is possible. We are rather merely speculators, asking whether it is likely that from a certain situation another would follow. And only one answer is possible: either the situation—here the complexity—is such that it has no counterpart in our ordinary experience, in which case we cannot judge: to say that the complexity does or does not irradiate is mere fancy. Or the situation is one that we know: the complexity is that of fibres in a piece of cloth, or of canes in a basket. In this case it most certainly cannot irradiate. It is to the first alternative that Whitehead adheres, and he allows his fancy to expatiate freely about and among a world of unknowns.

Of Descartes, Voltaire said, ' il écrivit des romans.' Whitehead, I do not think it would be unfair to say, writes romance. There are no rules of what can and what can not be admitted to a romance ; and with that, perhaps, we may leave his encyclopædism. It is one which he approves of as an aesthetic whole ; it need not, as indeed it does not, commend itself to us. But the enquiry we have just concluded provides an apt explanation for his fall from grace in the matter of style. When a philosopher says that certain things are unknown and yet goes on talking about them, he does not of course mean exactly what he says: he means that there is knowledge and knowledge. In Dr. Whitehead's work we often come across phrases like ' merely intellectual knowledge,' ' mere procedures of the mind,' ' arbitrary postulates of thought.' If

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the mind is to be distrusted, all that remains as a source of information is the senses, and Dr. Whitehead is ultimately, it seems to me, in the sensualist tradition. His prehensions are supposed to solve the problems of perception exactly as sense-impressions did: that is, by location or propinquity, in the one case within the event, in the other within or on the sense-organ. Knowledge of course is much more than a 'being near' or a touching; but, apart from that, sensualism has as its consequence inarticulacy. Speech depends upon the abstractive powers of the intellect. Dr. Whitehead is scrupulous enough to recognize this: he contrasts a 'vague massive feeling of derivation from our actual world,' which he says we all possess, with the 'clear distinctness' of appearance, and says that the vague feeling is the more important. Appearance, though it may be true as well as false, is an 'incredibly simplified' version of reality, and 'requires criticism by reference to elements in experience which are neither clear nor distinct.' It is difficult, but all the more important, to realize the full implication of a saying like this. Earlier in this paper, for example, it was hinted that clarity might be bought at too great a price—at that of simplifying the subject-matter beyond recognition: here it is not stated that in some cases clarity is unfortunately impossible, but that in them it is always undesirable. It is not suggested that particular attention be paid to what is obscure, to the end that it may receive the same consideration as if it were immediately clear: if it becomes clear at all it loses virtue, which lies wholly in its obscurity. Or we may reflect that each of Whitehead's events is the Hegelian Absolute, with regard to which 'contradictions cease from troubling and logic is at rest'; with, however, this difference. The Absolute, and knowledge of it, came at the end of a long process, in which logic was transcended, but only after it had been employed; and if the philosopher was not clear about the Absolute, it was at least clear about itself. Within each of Whitehead's events—within the event that at the present moment is myself—all process lies completed; what is not already clear will never be so. Logic is not so much transcended, as shunned. And so little within my present event is clear that, if it is to be the whole of reality, what is not clear must be both extensive and important. Approximation to this will then be the greatest wisdom: to 'feel' and not to know a variety of

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passions, strains and lures. These cannot be appropriated by knowledge, and philosophy has become not so much a matter for the brain as for the viscera. If the brain attempt it the only result can be a series of meaningless sounds or, if with meaning, then all redundant. Allowing for the impossibility in persisting for long in such an attempt—the instinct is strong to ' deviate into reason '—I do not think we have here too fantastic an account of a large part of Whitehead's prose.

The width and variety of Whitehead's interests made this paper difficult to open, and after many pages they still remain: criticism has been more or less technical, and confined to comparative detail. But the only alternative was to rely on a general impression which, of so vast a region and uninformed by a knowledge of structure, could be of little value. Perhaps some knowledge of structure has now been obtained. But also, I think, the above investigation provides a hint of what the general impression, based upon this knowledge, should be. That Whitehead's encyclopædism is made possible by his submission to fancy or taste may not be conclusive against it—for his fancy may be of the right kind, and lead him to select for emphasis what is important, and for illustration relevant detail ; in other words, he may, like a successful poet, produce an ' aesthetic whole ' which appeals not to himself alone—it does however suggest the question, ' Is Whitehead's fancy of this kind? ' And there are to hand materials for an answer. His sympathies are wide, ranging from the business man to the philosopher, from the 4th century B.C. to the present 20th ; but they are not discriminating, for all men, all centuries are in his eyes on a level. And now it is likely that he is in the sensualist tradition ; the deliverances of sense are not only voiceless, they are fleeting. Hence his universe is one of everlasting change ; in it there is nothing, not even the laws of electromagnetism, that will not one day decay. Other sensualist philosophers have done what they can to escape this issue. Hume, for example, left philosophy behind in the study, J. S. Mill introduced principles incompatible with his premises, but serving to make his conclusions more immediately palatable. Whitehead welcomes change: ' Even perfection,' he says, ' will not bear the tedium of infinite repetition,' and he relishes ' novelty and adventure.'

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' Stagnation is the deadly foe to morality,' for this is to him ' freshness, zest and keenness.' His universe strives after a perfection which it can never attain, but does not therefore cease from striving: it looks for ' a keener thrill.' Existence, being inevitably thwarted of its end, is entwined with ' pain, frustration, loss and tragedy,' but is only the more enjoyable, for tragedy is a spur to effort. Here, surely, there is sufficient evidence for a judgment upon the fineness of his feelings. To write the above sentences it is impossible he should realize what tragedy is, what an end is, what the bitterness can be which results from disappointment of an end. He must be ignorant of the nature of change, which brings with it the possibility of tragedy and disappointment. It is necessary only to consider with whom, and against whom, he ranges himself. On his side and speaking his language are the Group Movement, the Scout Movement, the Rotary Movement, the cinema poster ; opposed to him are Plato, Aristotle, and all who stand in the main tradition of European thought, the Christian Church and the army of poets. Plato found no tedium in perfection, but for him it was not a spasm of the sense. Abelard on the other hand wrote of the tedium of desire ; bearable only because of the hope of a country *ubi non prævenit rem*, and those who have neither confidence in nor hope of the satisfaction of desire, find courage only in the thought of its extinction.

The office of universal artist to which Dr. Whitehead aspires demands of its occupant not only that he extend recognition to everything, but that he recognize the better as better, and the best as best. By lack of this fastidiousness Dr. Whitehead fails. And the measure of his failure—the baseness of the elements in our civilization with which he can bring himself to ally—is at once a comment on that civilization, and a grim portent.

JAMES SMITH.

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REVALUATIONS (IV)

HARDY THE NOVELIST

THE English novelists of the 19th century have much lip-service paid them, but surprisingly little real attention. We read Dickens and Thackeray in our schooldays and, ever after, generalize about them without re-reading them. Some novelists, such as Trollope, have brief and unexpected returns to popularity and then relapse into obscurity again ; whilst a writer like George Eliot, though very rightly spoken of with the greatest respect, seems never to have had a public in this century.

Hardy's later date has prevented him, as yet, from being completely shrouded by this neglected sanctity, but conventional tribute is replacing serious consideration. He has been accepted as a great English novelist, and this has the usual effect of making everyone take him for granted, and so, cease to examine him at all.

Yet it is strange to find that it is only in England that Hardy has attained this unquestioned position. Unlike other established reputations, he is regarded on the Continent as an English fad ; that he was never awarded the Nobel Prize is significant—he would seem to have been an obvious choice in comparison with some of the prizewinners.

This lack of Continental standing should provide an excuse, if one is needed, for enquiring into the reasons for his English status, and considering how far it is justified. Judging by the writings on Hardy, the attribution of greatness is to be justified under two main heads—firstly, his philosophy of life and tragic world-outlook and secondly, his powers of characterization, exemplified chiefly in the rustics. Although some critics have found these ' period peasants, so pleasing to the metropolitan imagination '[1] blots on the seriousness of his art, nearly all have

[1]T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods.*

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agreed on the impressiveness of the philosophy, and the grandeur of the tragedy.

Before examining these characteristics and their place in the novels, it will help to consider his strangely limited achievement in verse. It would be curious if there were not some bearing, and the qualified nature of this achievement is significant. A few of the poems are indisputably great, others have the typical blend of good and inferior ; many are entirely trivial. And his conventional reputation as a poet is, as we see from the anthologies, based as much, or more, on the last group, as on the great poems. These inferior poems are nearly always intended to illustrate Hardy's so-called philosophy. Some are dramatic events, chosen to point it (' *The Convergence of the Twain* ' for instance), some mere anecdotes and imagined situations (*In the Moonlight*), and in some, Nature lends assistance to the same end (*Yell'ham Wood's Story*). The faults of the mass of this verse are obvious. The style is ' literary,' pedantic and, at the same time, *gauche*. This is shown up all the more by the striving after simplicity ; the result, usually, is something that might have come out of the poet's corner of a provincial newspaper. These poems are well paralleled by the short stories of the ' Life's Little Ironies ' type, which are also mere anecdotes to illustrate a philosophy, which is, itself, no more than a static credo.

But the same elements of style are seen in the really great poems (*e.g. After a Journey, Neutral Tones, A Broken Appointment*). Only here, there is something that fuses them into a genuinely impressive whole and, on examination, we find that this common factor is a precise, particular and strongly-felt personal memory. Indeed, the group which contains *After a Journey* and *The Voice,* two of the finest poems, is entitled *Veteris Vestigia Flammae*. In the nature of the case this concentrated, intensely realized personal feeling cannot be exactly paralleled in the novels—the effect, there, must be essentially cumulative. But there are a number of good second-order poems which may yield relevant considerations. In these poems, we have (but for the personal intensity) the same elements as in the great ones—the elements so oddly transmuted into greatness. A typical poem of this class, *Friends Beyond* will repay analysis. The first verse introduces the dead villagers:

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' William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at plough,
Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's.
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, lie in Mellstock churchyard now!

" Gone," I call them, gone for good, that group of local hearts and heads ;
Yet at mothy curfew-tide,
And at midnight when the noon-heat breathes it back from walls and leads,

They've a way of whispering to me—fellow-wight who yet abide—
In the muted, measured note
Of a ripple under archways, or a lone cave's stillicide.'

These second and third verses illustrate some typical Hardy traits. There is the odd, almost facetious, phrase—' local hearts and heads '—presumably born of a desire to escape the obvious, though not unsuccessful here, often almost ludicrous in its effect ; the keen, well-expressed observation—' when the noon-heat breathes it back from walls and leads '—which may often be found in the novels, especially in the descriptions of country life and activities ; and there is a touch of his characteristic naïve pedantry in the word ' stillicide,' so unfamiliar and rarely used.

In the next two verses, the moral is thrust at us—Hardy is pointing out the advantages of death over life in stilted and pedantic language. In verses six to ten, the words of the dead are continued more simply and effectively. There is the dialect of the Farmer and his wife :

Far.—' Ye mid zell my favourite heifer, ye mid let the charlock grow,
Foul the grinterns, give up thrift.'
Far. Wife—' If ye break my best blue china, children, I shan't care or ho.'

and the other villagers, even the Squire and Lady Susan, speak plainly and unaffectedly. Verses nine and ten, too, have nearly (not quite) perfect simplicity, and show Hardy at his best.

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All—' We've no wish to hear the tidings, how the people's
fortunes shift ;
What your daily doings are ;
Who are wedded, born, divided ; if your lives beat slow or
swift.

' Curious not the least are we if our intents you make or mar,
If you quire to our old tune,
If the City stage still passes, if the weirs still roar afar.'

The touch of localness in the last line is particularly effective. But Hardy is not content to end here. We must have the ' philosophy ' rammed down us again, the poem cannot be left to speak for itself.

—Thus, with very gods' composure, freed those crosses late
and soon
Which, in life, the Trine allow
(Why, none witteth), and ignoring all that haps beneath the
moon,

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at plough,
Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, murmer mildly to me now.

In this poem, we have practically all the elements of Hardy's work—the rural scene, the habit of contemplation, the strange vocabulary, and the habitual bent of mind, labelled, as a rule ' Philosophy.' It is this last which, by its obtrusiveness, prevents the poem from being completely successful, yet it is also the cause of the poem's being written. Personal observation is largely responsible for its success, both in the felicity of ' placing ' cited, and in the recording of dialect and dialogue. These conditions can be paralleled exactly in the novels. Before turning to them, one other point is brought out well by the verse. This is Hardy's complete lack of development. Of the great poems, *Neutral Tones* was written in 1867, *After a Journey* in 1911 ; the two might be interchangeable in date. It is the same with the novels ; there is no essential difference between the first of his best novels and the last.

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Turning to the novels, it is essential, as with the verse, to begin with the style—with the words and their handling. In the style, if anywhere, we shall find an expression of Hardy's sensibility ; and yet, if any analysis is attempted, the style seems almost wholly bad. What must be looked for, is an equivalent of the immediately personal feeling that is the source of the great poems. This, obviously, cannot be exactly paralleled in the novels ; rather, we must find something corresponding to the second order poems—something that will rely more on cumulative effect than on concentration. Very rarely does any one paragraph in any of the novels attain real impressiveness—Marty South's lament over Winterborne's grave in *The Woodlanders* comes nearest to it, combining simplicity of expression with a stylization of rustic speech that is unexpectedly successful—though the ending—' For you was a good man, and did good things '—seems over-consciously Shakespearean.

But, for the most part, the prose has the clumsy aiming at impressiveness, that was noticed in certain verses of *Friends Beyond*. The description of Egdon Heath, at the beginning of *The Return of the Native* is a representative example. Extracts will serve as illustration—anyone interested will find that it is all of the same material:

> ' The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation, their meeting-line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of an instalment of night which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come ; darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky.'

The second sentence merely amplifies the first, needlessly, and says the same thing in two equally stilted ways. An evident desire to impress results in mere verbosity and redundance, which continues for the rest of the paragraph. In the next one we are told that the Heath is only itself at night in this language:

> ' The spot was, indeed, a near relation of night, and, when night showed itself, an apparent tendency to gravitate together could be perceived in its shades and the scene. The sombre

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stretch of rounds and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it.'

Obviously to be impressive is, for Hardy, to be 'literary'—to use the erudite word in preference to the simple one; there is no real feeling for words in these passages.[1] Often this attempted impressiveness overflows from the style into a display of knowledge, classical, geographical and historical. There is an instance of this a few paragraphs further on, where Hardy discusses the possibility of a new ideal of beauty:

'Indeed, it is a question if the exclusive reign of this orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter. The new Vale of Tempe may be a gaunt waste in Thule: . . . And ultimately, to the commonest tourist, spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe are to him now; and Heidelberg and Baden be passed unheeded as he hastens from the Alps to the sand-dunes of Scheveningen.'

These shows of erudition often occur with more disastrous effect than in the present instance—for example, the much-admired ending of *Tess*: 'The President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess.' This seems to me grossly theatrical. Hardy, in his endeavour to be impressive, deserts his own conception of the 'Immanent Will' to drag in literary references.

Yet these references are an integral part of his style, and, irritating as they are, seem typical of him and his naïve ideas of scholarship and education—exemplified in Knight in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and, more successfully, in the first part of *Jude*. (In both books, too, there are particularly flagrant displays of erudition—Knight's geological vision as he is hanging on, for his life, to the cliff edge, and Jude's vision of the shades of Christminster). They are the natural sequel to the heavy, ponderous words he uses habitually; and he is never capable of writing simply and straightforwardly, except in the rustic dialogue. The

[1]For an excellent analysis of a typical page from *Tess* see *The Handling of Words* by Vernon Lee (Bodley Head).

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actual descriptions of rustic life and activities, carefully observed though they are, are conveyed in the same kind of awkward, Victorian journalese, which nearly wrecks many fine passages in *Tess* and *The Woodlanders*.

Hardy's dialogue is successful only with the ordinary villagers. His chief characters, even when of village origin, speak in precisely the same style that he uses for narration or description—this is, presumably, to give them added dignity, for we are always aware of a patronizing attitude towards the rustics. There are exceptions to this rule, notably Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*—a reason for this may be mentioned later—and Marty South in *The Woodlanders* ; but Winterborne, Jude, and often, Tess, speak a language that has little reference to any form of colloquial human speech, whilst for an example of the speech of educated people an extract from the quarrel of Clym and Eustacia will serve (*The Return of the Native*, Book V, Chapter 3). Clym is at the height of passion, Eustacia resigned to misery:

> ' " Phew—I shall not kill you " he said contemptuously, as if under a sudden change of purpose. " I did think of it, but—I shall not. That would be making a martyr of you, and sending you to where she is ; and I would keep you away from her till the universe come to an end, if I could."
>
> " I almost wish you would kill me," said she, with gloomy bitterness. " It is with no strong desire, I assure you, that I play the part I have lately played on earth. You are no blessing, my husband." '

And later, when Clym has almost lost control of himself, he erupts into:

> ' Do you brave me ? do you stand me out, mistress ? Answer. Don't look at me with those eyes as if you would bewitch me again! Sooner than that I die. You refuse to answer? '

Their ordinary conversation is in a similar style.

The rustic dialogue is very different. It is, undoubtedly, highly stylized, but the stylization is intentional and carefully done, whilst the dialogue of the other characters, compounded of the

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same elements as the narrative style, is unintentional in its stiltedness (it is significant that Hardy was a great admirer of Scott—there is a similar comparison between the speech of such characters as Bailie Nicol Jarvie, and Scott's narrative style). The rustic speech was founded on direct experience and observation and, in its nature, was more vivid than ' polite ' speech. In the novels, it is full of local legend and folk-lore that one meets again, unexpectedly. For instance, the story, told in *Far from the Madding Crowd* of Joseph Poorgrass, lost in the woods, and answering the owl's ' Whoo! whoo! ' with ' Joseph Poorgrass, if you please, sir,' has been told to me of a villager lost in Badby Woods, in Northamptonshire, and, very probably, exists in many other districts. There is some actual way of life behind the rustic speech, whilst that of Clym, Eustacia and the others, represents nothing but a decadent literary tradition.

We can assume that this intimate personal knowledge does, in the prose, as we have seen it do in the second-order poems, take the place, to some extent, of the personal reminiscence. Yet the rustics, themselves, have a comparatively minor place in the novels, and it may be as well to sketch their function.

They are consciously Shakespeareanized in function, as well as speech. That Hardy deliberately imitated Shakespeare may be seen in *The Dynasts*. In one or two brief scenes, Napoleon's servants imitate the very turns of Shakespearean speech, and this humour is intended as a direct commentary on the preceding serious scenes—they are intended to fulfil the function of Falstaff in *Henry IV* or Pistol in *Henry V*. These scenes are completely unsuccessful. The set aping is apparent, and there is no good rustic dialogue to compensate. But they furnish a direct key to the function of the rustics in the novels.

They appear as comic relief, as agents to help forward the plot (*e.g.* the stupidity of Christian Cantle in *The Return of the Native*) and as a chorus to explain and comment on the doings of the chief characters. They are handled very skilfully in this way—their talk is so amusing and well-written that we forget their part as machinery. But, at the highest estimate, they could not explain the success of a Hardy novel. Their best scenes come as introduction, interlude or explanation, and the note of patronage is never absent. As has been said, they stand for what makes

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the success of the second-order poems—the solid, intimately-known, habitual background of experience. They cannot fulfil the rôle of the intense personal experience of *A Broken Appointment* or *Neutral Tones*.

The further Hardy gets from this background, the less successful he is ; *The Trumpet-Major* is a far better piece of work than *The Dynasts*, though the vast bulk of the latter has an overwhelming effect on many readers. He had an intuition of the real value of the village life he describes and this, combined with his intimate knowledge of it, gives rise to many fine passages, for example, the threshing scene in *Tess*, where the travelling engineer with his threshing-machine is set in contrast with the workers on the stack. This scene has the vividness of a metaphor in its contrast between the old and new orders. Even the fact that the tragedy in his novels is often brought about by the intrusion into the village community of people from the outside world is, at least, partly due to Hardy's realization of the self-contained quality of village life, which must inevitably be shaken by the impact of other modes of life. It is this impact which results in suffering for Tess, Winterborne, Oak and Jude, and which is dramatized finally in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, his greatest novel. The struggle between Henchard and Farfrae, is symbolic of the inevitable passing of the old order. Farfrae, it is true, is a mere puppet, but Henchard possesses far more vitality than any other of Hardy's major characters, by reason of his representative function, and the knowledge Hardy had of what he represented. He clings to the old methods in business and agriculture, despising the new efficient ways of Farfrae, and is defeated and driven out by the younger man, inevitably and with no deliberate design on Farfrae's part. By this symbolic quality of the book, the main catastrophe is made to seem less forced and less dependent on the arbitrary ' Immanent Will,' than is usually the case—the whole book is more convincing, in spite of the stock-figures of Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane. And this convincingness comes directly from the fact that, here, Hardy was writing of an environment he knew even better than he did the countryside—the market town. ' Casterbridge ' was his native town and he knew even more about corn-dealing and small-town business than he did about farming and village-life. Even the chorus in *The*

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Mayor of Casterbridge is more plausible—he is not afraid to make Christopher Coney, Nance Mockridge and the rest, slightly sordid, as he knew the 'town-rustic' could be (for instance, Coney's theft of the corpse-money, and the whole episode of the skimmington-ride). He knew them too well to idealize them, as he had done the country rustic. Also, the incidents that bring about Henchard's ruin are mainly the results, not of a long chain of improbable coincidences, but of tricks of the weather, and rashness in dealing. Once again, we see in this sureness of environment, the equivalent of the conditions of success in poems such as *Friends Beyond*. And we shall find that the part played by the 'philosophy' in the novels is parallel with that which it played in those poems.

We can see that it is, to some degree, essential, by considering the only one of the better-known novels in which it is almost entirely absent: *Under the Greenwood Tree*. This is usually ranked as a pleasing trifle, lacking the grandeur of the six chief novels, but perfect of its kind (in one examination, candidates were invited to consider it as a literary parallel to the Dutch School in painting), and bracketed with *The Trumpet Major* being, probably, the more popular of the two. But an unbiassed reader will be struck most by the irritatingly facetious tone of the book. Hardy cannot stop patronizing his rustics, and there is an unpleasant effect of performing animals going through their tricks. This note is never quite absent, but, in the other novels, it is subdued by the important function of these characters as commentary and comic relief. But in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, there is nothing to be relieved—no contrast, and although the forcible intrusion of the 'philosophy' in other novels is often irritating and even ludicrous, the effect of its absence here serves to show that it was derived from a radical habit of mind, and was something essential to Hardy's organization. In writing comedy, he intrudes himself, too often, to say something that is not really part of his personal outlook, and the effect is disastrous. *Under the Greenwood Tree*, despite some excellent descriptive passages, such as that of a wood at night in the first chapter, is as quaint and picturesque as a Tudorbethan Tea-Shoppe. *The Trumpet Major* on the other hand, is one of the most successful novels. The essential, sombre background is supplied by the state of nervous

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tension in the Wessex villages during the Napoleonic wars, when they were in constant fear of invasion. The fatalism finds a natural expression in the miseries of war, of which we are always conscious, and, although the book is not a tragedy in the accepted sense of the word, nothing is sacrificed to a cheerfulness that was unnatural to Hardy. There is just an implicit conviction that things never come right—the weak and fascinating Bob is more likely to be successful than the honest and straightforward John—and this implicit quality prevents the conviction seeming so naïve as when Hardy stresses and endeavours to attach too much importance to it. Also, the book is founded largely on local legends and reminiscences, as Hardy himself tells us. The excitement caused by the false alarm of invasion, by the presence of the King, the large camps, the formation of the militia, lingered long in village memories, and Hardy heard many of the stories he uses from those who remembered them personally.

Another reason for the success of *The Trumpet Major* is that almost all the characters are villagers of varying rank, and Hardy does not have to go outside his personal environment to bring in stock-figures. All his characters are essentially simple, but such figures as Angel Clare and Alec d'Urberville are simple, not because Hardy really knew that such people were simple, but because he preferred to believe—at least, for the purposes of his story—in unadulterated good and evil, and used counters accordingly. The simplicity of Miller Loveday and his sons, Ann and her mother is not of this kind, but the result of Hardy's knowledge of the fundamental lack of complexity in the village character.

In the preface to *The Dynasts*, Hardy says of *The Trumpet Major*:

> ' I found myself in the tantalizing position of having touched the fringe of a vast international tragedy without being able, through limits of plan, knowledge and opportunity, to enter further into its events.'

From this, it seems clear that he had no knowledge of his own limitations, and did not realize his inability to deal satisfactorily with ' vast, international tragedy.' The bulk of *The Dynasts* looks impressive, but only a few scenes in this ponderous work possess any kind of vitality, and those deal with the familiar people and

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life of Wessex. *The Dynasts*, which is the direct expression of Hardy's beliefs and outlook, does more than anything to show that his was not a truly philosophical mind, and that he was incapable of any real thinking. His concept of a blind ' Immanent Will,' controlling all human action to disastrous ends, is just as obvious at the beginning of this lengthy work, as it is at the end. Near the beginning, the Spirit of the Years reveals to the Pities, the feelers and tentacles of the Will, pushing human beings to war and disaster. This occurs several times in the course of the work, and on the last occasion, nothing has been added since the first. The hundreds of intervening pages contain nothing but a long series of battles and conferences made up of incredibly bad blank verse, and dull prose descriptions, in the form of stage-directions. The vision of the Will serves to jog the reader's attention now and then, to remind him that there is a moral to be drawn from this versified history. There is no question of the genuineness of the habit of mind expressed by the ' philosophy,' but this ' philosophy ' is far from adequate to the function assigned it in the construction of an epic.

We may see the same thing in novels. As long as the habitual ' philosophic ' attitude remains in the background, it gives atmosphere and unity to the book ; it stands for Hardy's essential character, his constancy of bent, the sense of fate, and the level of seriousness at which he contemplates human life. But directly, he obtrudes it on our attention, it becomes tedious and unconvincing. Often, to point his moral and bring about the tragic climax, he has to resort to a long chain of improbable coincidences, Tess's confession, slipped under Angel's door, goes under the carpet, Winterborne's team meets Mrs. Charmond's carriage in a narrow lane, and forces it to turn back: these are well-known instances. But there are even more flagrant examples, as in *The Return of the Native*. Here, most of all, we get the impression that Hardy thought of his tragedy, but had difficulty in bringing it about. First, Mrs. Yeobright sends Christian Cantle—almost the village idiot—with the money to be divided between Clym and Thomasin. On the way he meets the heathmen going to a raffle, accompanies them, wins the raffle, and is so elated with his success that he gambles with Wildeve and loses all his own money, and Mrs. Yeobright's, to him. But Venn is watching, and regains it

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all. He, however, gives it all to Thomasin by mistake, and it is not divided until after Mrs. Yeobright and Eustacia have met and quarrelled. It is then too late, for this quarrel leads to Eustacia being unwilling to open the door to Mrs. Yeobright when she calls. By another completely incredible coincidence, Eustacia thinks Clym has opened the door, when he is really asleep, and Mrs. Yeobright goes away (having seen Eustacia looking at her, and knowing Clym to be inside), and is killed by an adder's bite. Her words before her death lead to the violent quarrel between Clym and Eustacia, which, eventually leads to the final tragedy. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge,* we are told—' But the ingenious machinery contrived by the Gods for reducing human possibilities of amelioration to a minimum . . . stood in the way of all that.' In such instances as this, the machinery is too obviously contrived by Hardy himself.

Sometimes the ' philosophy ' is obtruded, not only in a series of events, but in a crude form of symbolism. The result is much the same—the habit of mind is thrust on the reader as profound thought. A notable instance is the child, Father Time, in *Jude the Obscure.* He is the fruit of Jude's purely sensual marriage with Arabella, and he brings disaster to the happier, ' intellectual ' union with Sue. From his first appearance on the scene, unhappiness begins, and it is he who performs the deed that leads to their separation, Jude's re-marriage with Arabella, and death. The child's words and actions are always presented with such gloomy portentousness, that they become ludicrous—as in the scene at the flower-show, where his comment is, ' I should like the flowers very, very much if I didn't keep on thinking they'd be all withered in a few days.' This remark, by its position in the book, is apparently intended as very significant, and in ominous contrast to the happiness that has gone before. Hardy is very anxious to explain Father Time's function as a symbol: ' The boy's face expressed the whole tale of their situation. On that little shape had converged all the inauspiciousness and shadow which had darkened the first union of Jude, and all the accidents, mistakes, fears, errors of the last. He was their nodal point, their focus, their expression in a single term.'

Hardy, however, sometimes employs a more successful kind of symbolism, where the meaning is implicit, and not deliberately

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pointed out. Of this kind is Jude's first encounter with Arabella ; she throws a pig's genitals at him to attract his attention. This brief incident gives us, without any intrusive comment, full information about Arabella, and the probable course of events—by its conciseness, it achieves some of the power of a metaphor. Another example of this occurs in *Tess*. Tess has set out to visit Angel's parents, but when she arrives, they are all at church. While she stands ringing the bell of the empty house, she finds herself looking, absently, at a piece of bloodstained paper, fluttering about in the road. Again, needing no explicit comment and none being offered, the incident is really impressive.

A return to Father Time and *Jude* leads to a consideration of Hardy's moral attitudes. Although *Jude*, with its denunciation of the marriage-laws scandalized the bishops, it is not so ' modern ' in outlook, as both Hardy and his opponents thought ; instead, it is rooted in the Victorian age. Hardy saw the attendant ills of the institution of marriage in a way his contemporaries did not but, as *Jude* shows, he was almost as opposed to—though more understanding of—any form of sensuality, as they were. Arabella is the incarnation of sensuality and Jude's marriage with her results in poverty, suffering and the loss of his hopes, and, when he appears to have reached happiness, Father Time, the fruit of this marriage, appears, to bring about disaster. Similarly, Jude and Sue live together in an unbelievably Platonic manner—it is only when their union becomes physical, and children are born, that the catastrophe is made possible. Hardy never loses sympathy with Jude and Sue, but his opinions on physical love are obvious—' the wages of sin is death.' Both here and in *The Woodlanders*, his protest against marriage-laws becomes a protest against sensuality. The bishops' horror is all the more understandable, when we consider that Hardy was attacking the marriage-laws to promote virtue.

Other incidents that go to show that Hardy was really a good Victorian may be easily found. We may remember the cause of Tess' tragedy, and the circumstances of Winterborne's death, and there is scarcely any criticism, implicit or otherwise, of Angel Clare. A useful contrast may be drawn between Alec d'Urberville and Arthur Donnithorne in *Adam Bede*—there can be little doubt that George Eliot's attitude is the more ' modern ' of the two.

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This Victorianism is part of Hardy's strength ; it stands for the solid, static environment, and his own, the simple, taking-for-granted stolidity—like Dorchester and the country round, it forms his essential background, and the necessary code and framework in which he was to work. Thirty years later, he could not have been so sure of himself, and, I think, could not have formulated any satisfactory response to contemporary problems. (In this connection, it is interesting to compare his Boer War poems with those written during the last war). Just as his style in verse and prose remained unaltered throughout his literary career, so his outlook remained static. His very pessimism implies firm and solid positions—there is none of the agonizing doubt and conflict that we find in a man like Lawrence. And though he felt some sympathy and admiration for the passionate Eustacias, it is always the Thomasins and Venns who fare best, and have the most amiable qualities.

The prose of the novels must, in some way, be an expression of Hardy's sensibility, its ponderous ' literary ' quality notwithstanding. But any effect it achieves must depend peculiarly on cumulative processes ; indeed, the analysis of any isolated paragraph will yield only the faults we have seen. These faults, naturally, stand out clearly, when the urgency of the writing relaxes, and the attitude becomes ' *voulu*.' Where we shall find the prose taking on real impressiveness will be in some portion of a book where all Hardy's most vital interests and attitudes are engaged. The greater part of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and Parts One and Two of *Jude the Obscure* are both good examples, and anyone interested should turn to these books. We become aware that this clumsy, polysyllabic style is not ordinary journalese, but stands for real character. It is easy to regard it as a suitable medium, in its ' literary ' impressiveness, for the record of Jude's striving for knowledge, and attempts at self-education. It is obviously the product of a mind which was as firmly convinced about the question of style, as about everything else, and its Victorianism has just the same virtues and limitations as Hardy's Victorian attitudes. Detailed analysis is impossible, and would probably defeat its own ends. But, whatever its faults, Hardy's medium is individual, and unlike that of any of his contemporaries. His style could never lend itself to the indecent bathos of the

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death of Little Nell—it is as unyielding as his attitude. In the novels we feel his greatness as the greatness of the Victorian age, in its solidity and its sureness of what it really valued, yet Hardy is above the Victorian ethos, and did not share the limitations that made tragedy impossible and was responsible for the unpleasant sentimentality of Dickens and Thackeray. The life he describes is still in touch with primary production.

His is a curiously qualified greatness, and is not what it is conventionally taken to be—a vaguely metaphysical one. But the greatness is there, and both the rural environment and the ' philosophy '—which, at least, represents a serious outlook—have their essential significance.

FRANK CHAPMAN.

AMATEURISM AND PROFESSIONALISM IN ECONOMICS

' The mole digs and the eagle flies, but their end is the same.'

—T. S. ELIOT, *possibly from the Arabic.*

I.

NOWADAYS there seems to be a revival of the old hostility towards economic science. This may be a particular expression of a growing distrust of science in general. We know of more than one past age that has been unfriendly to the scientific spirit, and it is not impossible that we are now entering upon another such. If we are, it is a very serious matter, and one that raises grave issues—issues so grave that they are far beyond

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the scope of the present argument, which is concerned with a certain kind of criticism that is commonly aimed at economics only and not at science in general.

This is a kind of criticism which, I think, issues from an intolerance of the notion that there are two quite different ways of going to work in the discussion of problems—two ways which have no accepted names, and to which I have therefore given the possibly misleading names ' amateurism ' and ' professionalism ' ; for although these words have connotations that are foreign to my meaning, they nevertheless express it better than any pair of words that I can think of.

I should therefore explain that I do not wish to classify economists into the unpaid and the paid, or the inadequately and the adequately paid, or to separate those who feed in green academic pastures from their more agile brethren of the wilderness. Such playing-field analogies are clearly impertinent. Neither do I wish to call attention to the disagreeable fact that much of what passes for economics nowadays, even in such discriminating pages as those of *Scrutiny*, is the product of writers who, despite their frequent expertness in other fields, are apt, when discussing economic matters, to fall into elementary errors such as usually entrap none but the most unpractised thinkers. This may be called amateurism ; but hardly amateurism in economics.

My present concern is only to argue that there are two ways of dealing with economic problems, each of them worthy of being taken seriously ; that one of these ways is preferred by some economists and the other by others ; but that because one of them is a slower and less direct process than the other it has evoked unsympathetic criticism from lay commentators—seldom from economists ; and that much of this criticism has been completely mistaken.

The one method is that of the economists who deal with particular problems as they arise, working in each case from premises and by processes that are intended to commend themselves to the unspecialized. The other method is that of the economists who sometimes do not deal with particular problems at all, but who, if they should do so, discuss them in a way which is usually unintelligible to the unspecialized critic, whether because they base their arguments upon premises which are not self-evident or because they condense them according to more or

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less esoteric conventions. I call the former kind of treatment amateur because it is *ad hoc*, isolated, having no more in common with other studies in the same field than with similar studies in other fields ; idiosyncratic, and yet catholic. I call the latter kind of treatment professional because it is episodic, conventional, drawing upon and contributing to a regular set of tools of a trade.

By way of exemplification it may be stated that, in my terminology, Cantillon and Gossen were both outstanding exponents of professionalism, although neither of them taught economics for his living. And that perhaps the greatest ' amateur ' economists that England has possessed are Thomas Mun, many of the Classical writers including the earlier Ricardo and the T. R. Malthus of the first *Essay on Population*, and that direct heir of all that was best in their thought, Edwin Cannan. Alfred Marshall is a most interesting example of a blend of the two. He thought out his arguments in strictly professional form, but his ultra-sensitiveness to criticism of all kinds led him to express them otherwise.

II.

Now the ' amateur ' method is the direct method of dealing with a problem. *Prima facie*, it needs no defence. It is the scientific method of all sensible men—*qua* sensible man—which no sensible man talks about because there is nothing novel to say about it among people who are agreed as to certain rudiments of logic.

The *onus probandi* is on the ' professional ' method. It is this which is the less obvious method—the *Produktionsumweg*, to take an analogy from Böhm-Bawerk's terminology ; it is an indirect method of producing knowledge, oblique, circuitous, ambagious. And its apologia must follow the lines of the general argument for such methods. Indirect methods cannot be justified universally. The justification of any particular such process must take the form of a proof, or at least a presumption, that its productive superiority will outweigh the disadvantages of its complexity and probable relative slowness.

Of course, in the production of knowledge, as in that of material goods, the choice is hardly ever between methods that

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are indirect and methods that are perfectly direct, but rather between methods that are more direct and methods that are less direct than others. Just as there is extremely little production in the physical sense that does not involve the use of some capital, so there is little thinking worthy of the name that does not involve the unconscious if not conscious use of many logical tools. The difference between the two kinds of thinking really lies in the use by the professional method of *special* tools, as distinct from the large common stock of tools which are so common that they are not recognized as tools at all.

Perhaps there is no demonstrable reason for accepting the criterion of productivity in the world of thought. But without necessarily accepting the assertion that no knowledge is worth striving for unless it promises to have a valuable practical application, still less the assertion (*pace* Professor F. H. Knight and Mr. D. K. Kitchin) that knowledge divorced from a practical application is inconceivable, it is possible to draw a clear distinction between the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and its pursuit for some ulterior purpose ; and to be rather unsympathetic—on purely irrational grounds, of course—towards the type of mind that chooses economics as a mental gymnastic in preference to less dangerous and more sociable forms of recreation.

The present notes are not intended as a defence of *Produktionsumwege* in economics, but merely as a statement that they exist, and an argument that much current disapproval of them is the fruit of failure to understand their nature and objectives.

III.

The obvious advantages of the direct method lie in its immediacy, in the rapidity with which it hastens to its end, in the economy of effort with which it may in fortunate circumstances yield its results. These are the only positive and peculiar virtues that it possesses. Even its apparent economy is often illusory. It is the kind of economy that does not ' waste ' time and effort in building a bridge over a stream, an economy which is real only so long as the stream is small and the demands for crossing it modest. Or it is the kind of economy that brings down an apple from a high tree by a lucky shot with a stick.

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The direct method may be extremely stimulating in the hands of a master ; but so may the indirect. And if the indirect method is for any reason not available, then the direct method may be better than no method at all. But this is hardly a positive virtue. Perhaps the direct method gives greater scope to genius, or at least to the more ordinary sorts of genius. But it also gives greater scope to muddleheadedness. In the hands of the incompetent its effects are often irreparably unfortunate ; and even in the best and safest hands it makes rather for isolation, misunderstanding, and controversy, than for comparison, enlightenment, and synthesis. It must bear the chief blame for that apparently perverse scrapping in the dark, that beating of the air, the walls, the furniture, anything but the opponent, which has always been a prominent feature of scientific controversy.

IV.

That the indirect method is necessary and desirable seems almost self-evident to some economists ; but this does not release them from the obligation to defend it against the many objections to it that are met with so constantly and so universally. This is not the place to attempt a proper answer to these objections ; but it may be fitting to mention the chief of them.

Some critics object to indirect methods on the ground of their alleged uselessness. The less extreme of these argue that their roundaboutness represents a waste of effort or of time. This objection is well-founded enough in some cases—Edgeworth might have found it an awkward argument against which to defend some of the more refined of his constructions—but to treat it as an objection against indirect methods indiscriminately seems to suggest a total misconception of the nature and advantages of *klug gewählte* roundaboutness. Such criticism amounts to a sort of intellectual Distributism or Erewhonism.

There are other critics who do not deny the theoretical advantages of the method but who express doubts of its practicability. There are those, for instance, who argue that ' economic facts ' are so complex that any attempt to construct a conscious and explicit system for dealing with them must constitute a task far beyond the abilities of any single generation of thinkers and perhaps

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even of co-operative thought over an indefinite number of generations. Such critics may point out that it is not always the abstract economist who makes the best prophet ; that the ' practical ' man, arriving at his conclusions by unconscious processes, is often more to be trusted for guidance in speculative enterprises than the best-equipped systematic thinker. They may admit that his method of ' feeling ' an atmosphere is mechanically the same as that of the conscious theorist, but still argue that he is doing as an art something that can no more be done on a scientific basis than *The Tempest* could conceivably have been manufactured by a comptometer.

It is impossible, at least in certain moods, not to be impressed by this argument ; but to surrender to it unconditionally is unnecessary Complete and minute analysis may be beyond our reach, but we already possess a sufficient working capital of economic doctrine to enable us to produce conclusions sufficiently true for practical purposes concerning say at least half the economic issues that trouble politicians at present.

The objections of those who reject indirect methods on irrationalistic grounds are harder to meet ; but they must not be mistaken for criticisms of indirect methods only. If valid, they rule out all thinking, as most of us understand the term. But, of course, an irrationalistic philosophy—the term is almost a tautology—no more involves the rejection of rationalistic logical processes than a belief in the beauty of the English countryside is inconsistent with the consultation of ordnance maps.

V.

If any fact relevant to the present argument is clear, it is the fact that we do not yet know enough—not merely that we do not know enough for purposes of practical application, but that we do not even know enough to see clearly which precise method of adding to our knowledge promises to be the most fruitful. In such circumstances it is both ungracious and unwise for any of us to insist too dogmatically upon the unique value of our own methods, whatever our private convictions may be. But perhaps this much may be asserted without undue presumption: that there

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is a clear need at present for both kinds of economic investigation, for *ad hoc* discussion of urgent problems, for patient and systematic ' light-bearing ' analysis in the hope of ultimate improvement upon the results of such ' amateur ' investigation as we must content ourselves with for the present. On the whole, the modern tendency seems to be decidedly in the direction of ' professionalism ' ; but very much in this direction remains to be hoped for. What is needed among the system-builders is, of course, not ' agreement among themselves ' if that means the setting-up of canons of orthodoxy against which none dare rebel. It seems a mistake to compare economic truth with a jewel at the bottom of a well or a pearl hid in a field ; it is much more like the winch and bucket, the spade and plough, that serve for the everyday drawing of water and tilling of the soil ; and there is no reason for supposing that the products of any one particular firm of tool and implement makers will have a monopoly of usefulness. Perhaps the best worker in the economic field of the future will be he who is able to work with the greatest number of good tools—assorted tools, alternative, ' contradictory.'

But there is one sort of agreement that is most necessary: agreement about definitions, about the scope of our various departments, and about the things that we wish to treat as axiomatic and not *sub judice* in our particular systems.

H. E. Batson.

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THE WORK OF L. H. MYERS

IN all four of his novels[1] L. H. Myers is concerned with the theme of individual development in a civilized society, a society in which leisure and a tradition of culture make possible the practised intelligence and sensibility which he takes to be necessary conditions of development. He doesn't imply of course that leisure and a cultural tradition in themselves ensure any significant development, and in fact in *The Clio* he sees what can be said for this civilized background in the absence of any of the highly developed individuals whom he's really interested in. He there tries to convey the value of formal self-control and civilization ' in the ordinary and slightly gross sense of the word ':

> ' The smell which the punkah wafted forth was human—human, but not too human ; warm and yet fresh—a smell delicate and composite ; artificial because soaps, perfumes, powders, tobacco, hair lotions and sachet-scented fabrics entered into it ; but naturalized and blended into unity by the odour of the human body ; a smell of men and women living in the highest possible state of cleanliness ; the smell of the fine flower of civilization.'

Sir James Annesley, dying of blackwater fever in the expensive steam yacht on the Amazon, makes the effort of remaining a self-possessed and considerate member of a civilized social group. The howling of the monkeys disturbed his last few nights.

> ' Whether he looked forward to the usual uproar at dawn, or whether he hoped to die first, was not easy to determine. At about two o'clock he surprised the doctor by concentrating

[1] *The Orissers* (Putnam, 1922), *The Clio* (Putnam, 1925), *The Near and the Far* (Cape, 1929), *Prince Jali* (Cape, 1931). The last two are part of a trilogy not yet completed.

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his faculties sufficiently to frame one or two definite questions regarding the monkeys' appearance and habits. The doctor went to the professor's cabin and woke him to obtain the desired information. Returning, he said:

"The howling monkey stands about two feet high. He has long silky hair, of a reddish-brown colour on the back, golden on the flanks. It is owing to an unusual development of the hyoid bone that his cry has such extraordinary resonance. The howling monkey can make himself heard easily at a distance of two miles. When he howls he sits at the top of some great tree which dominates the surrounding forest."

"Thank you," breathed Sir James, who had listened with a feeble smile. He died not long afterwards, just before the monkeys began their concert.'

Sir James is not presented as anything other than a rather selfish man of small elegant life. The superficiality (in one sense) of the civilization he stands for is stressed not only explicitly in the triviality of many of the characters, but also by the recurrent contrast between it and the elementary impulses and physical facts below it. The death of Sir James is the most profound statement of the theme ; but it also appears in his mild lechery just before his illness ; ironically, perhaps a trifle superciliously, in the liberal don's boarding the yacht (and entering the story) in a desperate effort to cope with diarrhœa brought on by a surfeit of stewed turtle ; and in Hugo's panic and collapse in the jungle when he thinks a poison snake has bitten him. Myers' aim, in fact, is to provide immediate unargued persuasion of the worth of a highly irrational civilization regardless of the smallness of interest or achievement of its individual representatives.

The Clio as a whole, in spite of the significance of this theme, lacks richness and importance. Its comparative failure is closely related to a difference in the treatment of character between this book and the others, the immediate sign of the difference being that you are invited to feel a little superior to the characters here whereas in the other novels you respect them. Compare Hugo (from *The Clio*) with Hari (from *The Near and Far*) when they are both in love without realizing that their love is returned:

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> 'Hugo grieved, but not even his mother's anguish could distract him from the delicious agitation by which he was possessed. For he was still uncertain. His foolish heart still questioned "Is my love returned?" Before him stretched an exquisite vista, full of mysteries and discoveries; ardent, he was waiting to be cured of his unbelief.'

Then the difference of attitude in this description of Hari returning from a journey:

> 'He had a foolish hope that he might come upon Sita sitting beside the lake path, and as he dismounted before the old Rajah's house he gazed up at the windows with the same causeless expectation . . . During the interval he had no thought but this: "I shall know how I stand the first moment I set eyes upon her." In his mind the idea had become firmly fixed that this meeting would reveal the turn of his fate. Her face, her attitude, the manner of her greeting—he trembled in anticipation; and it was with a still more profound inward tremor that he entered the room.'

The tone adopted towards Hugo is typical of *The Clio*: in that book, although his theme is profound, underlying even the subtlest lives, Myers is attempting to present it in the lives of people who are not, as individuals, of any great interest. It is for this reason that one is made to feel aloof from the characters; it is only the total pattern that they contribute to which can make any claim on our interest. In this technical respect *The Clio* can be classed with, say, T. F. Powys's novels, although with its less richly specific presentation of the theme and its less bold and well-knit pattern it is far inferior to Powys's best work. This treatment of character is probably only possible when a novel's themes are the simple profundities.

In his better work Myers is engrossed with the subtler problems which cannot exist except for those who are living finely, and which besides raising fundamental issues also make up the detailed texture of living; and these novels, instead of being an *expression* of problems and beliefs, are rather a means in themselves of defining the problems and clarifying the beliefs. With this change of aim goes a change in the use of character: the people represented

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now are of the kind who have an immediate personal relevance for you apart from the total pattern of the novel. The heroes are at least as subtle and as complex in interest and feelings as you, and the villains—even if you feel superior to them—are formidable. Walter Standish, the anxiously rationalizing business leader of *The Orissers*, is perhaps nearest to being pitiable, but the plot of the novel gives him the material importance and formidability that such people always have. From this point of view he is a more serious creation than Dos Passos's J. Ward Moorhouse ; one never feels (except occasionally in *The Clio*) that Myers is in the least guilty of merely ' placing ' people and indicating his superiority to them, for if he deals with them at all it is because they raise genuine problems for him. It is this that gives him his seriousness as an artist. His work, like the personality of Allen (in *The Orissers*), is marked by ' the complete absence in him of that spirit, which, disguised and subtle in operation, so largely insulates man from man—the spirit of competition.' When he does introduce people whom he despises it is because they are seriously relevant to the people he respects. Madeline, for instance, is one of the people who are every day doing injury to your life, detestable and hateful, not just a feature of the human scene to be observed and labelled from a presumed vantage point ; at her final defeat you feel that the author is triumphantly thankful he brought it off—he allows himself for the first time a little fierce mockery :

> ' " Stop ! " cried Madeline, now flushing to a deep crimson. " From you I refuse to hear a word more ! " And she wheeled round upon her unfortunate fiancé. " Walter, I have to put you a question ! "
>
> She paused. Her whole being was shaken by an almost delirious excitement. " Walter ! " she cried in thrilling accents. " Have you at any time this evening suspected *me* of—of—"
>
> She was unable to finish. Not only was she well-nigh incapable of speech, but there was no idea in her mind distinct enough for articulate expression. Her eyes, however—charged with a dreadful intensity of menace and supplication—conveyed a sufficient meaning.
>
> In the ensuing moments Walter's mind performed prodigies. He realized that, unless he could speak the word, he was lost.

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She asked: Had he suspected her of—? Merciful heavens! Of what? That blank provided a God-sent loophole. Besides, in any case, " suspect " was surely much too strong a term? Aye, he was saved. Saved! For he could—and he would—and forthwith, most magnificently he did—step forward and in a solemn voice reply: " Never, Madeline! Never! "

Indescribable instant! At those magic words Madeline's entire frame relaxed ; happy tears gathered in her eyes ; a smile of tremulous thankfulness spread over her upward-turned face.

And what pride, what tenderness, in Walter's answering smile!

Slowly she moved towards him. He took her hands in his. Rapturous silence! '

These features of Myers' use of character might seem to invite the charge that we are identified with his people and indulged with wish-fulfilment. I am not sure, however, what ' identification ' and ' wish-fulfilment ' are supposed to mean. In reading Myers' novels you certainly feel sympathy with some of the characters and pleasure when things—material and spiritual—go well with them ; just as you feel about real people if you have any social life. But you are not, in these novels, ' projected ' into any one character ; you are ' projected,' rather, into the situation, and respond to the whole of it like an invisible and impotent spectator who is nevertheless in social contact with the characters.

It is worth while seeing why Myers' novels are in this respect so different from those of Powys, into which this projection doesn't occur, or occurs to an infinitely smaller degree. It might seem to be that Powys's characters are more simplified and formalized so that they have less verisimilitude. But then Lawrence's Man who loved islands is also simplified and ' flat,' and yet you feel, I think, much more closely in contact with him than with any of Powys's characters. Powys's more mannered writing might be held to explain the difference ; but the quite ' natural ' writing of George Eliot in *Scenes from Clerical Life* still allows this impression to remain, that you and she are aloof spectators of the characters in spite of feeling a kindly concern for them or even being deeply moved. The difference seems to go back ultimately not to prose style, nor to degree of formalization in character presentation, but

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to the question whether or not the author chooses to express himself in characters who are admittedly his equals in sophistication and sensibility (at least in the direction he is exploring at the moment). If he does (and if he is himself as mature and sensitive as you can appreciate), then you will establish imaginatively a subtle—and perhaps detailed and various—social relationship with his characters. If he does not, your imaginative social relationship with the characters may be profound, but it will not engage you subtly ; it will be simple and generalized—as it may be when you hear of starving multitudes of Chinese or, for that matter, of the unemployed closer at hand. Myers' novels then, except *The Clio*, present characters and situations with which you are invited to enter imaginatively into full and subtle social relationships.

Returning to the themes of the novels (for it is the maturity of his interests and outlook that gives Myers his primary appeal), one can take *The Clio*, in spite of the chronology, as a preliminary to *The Orissers*, in which he focusses upon the more highly developed people which civilized leisure sometimes throws up. One purpose—perhaps his main purpose—is to give form to his intuition of the undying conflict that exists between sensitive and cultured individuals and the world of commercial values and social competitiveness.

> ' Could John Mayne ever forget these reflections of himself which flashed upon him out of eyes set in a countenance cold and white with contempt? Could Lilian ever forget the shining desire in his eyes to wound and break the innermost spirit within her? How swiftly they grew to understand one another, those two! And how invariably each accretion of knowledge brought about an accretion of disgust! Was there any feeling, opinion, or taste of his wife's that John Mayne did not feel injurious to his own? Was there anything she held in love or admiration which was not the object of his secret hostility and disdain? Much did they learn, and quickly, in those days! It seemed to them that they had been as little children until then. Man's fundamental unity in aspiration was a myth ; the simple old saying that one man's meat is another man's poison was the first and last word in human philosophy.'

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The Orissers is built explicitly around this conflict, and in the trilogy the hostility of the world to sensibility and intelligent living is a constant background:

> 'Poor Jali! If he had been fairly quick to learn that those who do not possess any natural refinement bitterly resent that quality in others, he did not yet fully realize that refinement is the hardest thing in the world to dissimulate. His new acquaintances detected evidences of it in his very endeavours to disguise it. His very humility was humiliating to them.'

Almost equally prominent in *The Orissers* is the conflict between those who are, ethically, mere social units, and those who possess insight and live according to a morality which is individually tested and accepted. On the one hand are Walter and Madeline—'Madeline, drawing herself up, all bust and self-respect,' who headed the diary of her vindictive hostilities, 'We must idealize or we should cease to struggle.' These are the essentially childish people of the world—trying to eat their cake and have it—violating their ideals and blinkering themselves to the fact. On the other hand are, first, Mayne himself and Nina, allied to these people by their worldly values but possessing some insight into their motives and being to that extent antagonistic to their allies; secondly, Allen, Lilian and Nicholas, people who know and will consciously admit their true needs, who will do what is necessary, even if the social name for it is murder or adultery or seduction, and will take responsibility for having done it. This self-responsibility, however, neither violates genuine social feelings nor belittles tradition, for, as Myers with delicate insight constantly shows, it is the really individual who are capable of the finest social feeling. A sensitive awareness of what social life involves comes out for example in *The Near and the Far* when Amar realizes his obligation to Hari:

> 'His departure left the two others burdened with a good many small embarrassments. To get rid of one of them, to let Hari see where he stood, Amar put warmth into his tone and said: "I know whom I have to thank for this visit; I caught sight of you this morning out of the window. Really, my dear Hari, that was a crowning act of kindness."
>
> Hari actually coloured. "I can't think why I didn't do it before. The Prince showed himself perfectly amiable."

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After this they went on talking about Daniyal, and although the talk had a fair appearance of naturalness, there was considerable strain beneath the surface. Nothing said was more than a half-truth ; to go further in any direction would be, each felt, a dangerous and difficult venture. But contact with Amar's mind (even of this gingerly sort) had the effect of concentrating Hari's attention upon the " vugarity " in Daniyal. His sense of it in the past had remained floating in suspension ; a drop of acid from Amar's particular fastidiousness had been needed to precipitate it.'

And in *The Orissers* even Madeline herself has a fretting intuition that Lilian possesses the finer way of living and the finer impulses as well as an astringent insight into the self-deceptions of her opponents. She has carefully rehearsed a ' scene ' in which she is to have the triumph of humiliating Lilian while exhibiting herself as an exemplar of Christian womanliness:

' She broke the silence on the very instant she willed, and found that she was word perfect ; she had at her command not only the phrases she had prepared, but every look and tone, down to the flicker of an eyelid or the sudden catch of breath. Only—it distracted her to feel within her bosom this tumult that so ill accorded with her words and her demeanour. She was giving voice to feelings that were true,—to feelings that were deeply cherished and had been with her but a few instants ago. Why had they thus treacherously fled? Why was she made false to herself in the hour of trial? Why was she condemned to give, even hiddenly, a false justification to this cold, sneering woman's interpretation of her? The unfairness of it made her heart boil. Anger came to aggravate the seethe and surge of nameless passion within . . . Whither were fled the strength and the sweetness that, an hour ago, had belonged to her?—the strength to enforce the conviction of her sincerity upon the mean and frigid spirit of the woman who opposed her ; the sweetness that would neutralize the acridity of the heart that resisted her. Was this the fashion in which the spirit of Christ served its votaries? Or by what art did her enemy contrive to reduce others to her own level, and make nobility seem nothing but a sham? '

Finally she was forced to see her own nature unrationalized:

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> ' Thus round and round, she eddied ; and while her lips thus spoke, an anguished, and yet exultant, ferocity peeped out through the eyelets of her mask. At last her heart was making confession unto itself . . . She rejoices in the horror which she excites. She sees Lilian—silenced, fascinated, revulsed—shrink uncontrollably away. Good! 'Tis good! Lilian doubted the other, the saintly Madeline, did she not? Lilian deemed the saintly Madeline no better than a hypocrite? Well! why then does she shrink back, when the real Madeline offers to appear? Why is she afraid of the only reality she knows? Is she affrighted by the creature of her own evocation? What does she find to dread? Does she, perchance, guess that there is one gesture, and one only, by which the real Madeline might express herself? Does she apprehend that the real Madeline might rise, and putting forth a giant's strength, smite her detested face with open palm? '

The latter passage illustrates not only Myers' insight but also the unfortunate prose in which he sometimes presents it and which for many people must be a serious obstacle to the appreciation of his work's excellence. In *The Orissers* he seems to have accepted ready-made a literary convention in which the differences between conversation and writing are deliberately stressed ; at its worst it is stilted, ponderous, given to clichés (' Her visage congested with passion . . . '), and suggests an unspontaneous larding on of ' style ' :

> ' The light of all his days was concentrated by that man upon the vestiges of the past, and at night, as he sat musing outside his tent, you saw him seeking a further inspiration from the ancient light of stars . . . Whatever was censurable in this attitude, Allen, whose enthusiasm followed a similar bent, was predisposed, as we have already said, to condone.'

At its best the convention succeeds in giving a highly formal lavishness. This effect often occurs in the descriptions of the settings, which also, at their worst, suggest the realistic stage sets of the conventional theatre ; though more often they justify themselves as effective reinforcements of the themes:

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> ' Stepping out of doors, he paused under the shock of the heat and light. The whole surface of the earth quivered with the exuberance of a life intoxicated by the sun. On the strips of lawn that intersected the flower beds, heaps of freshly-mown grass were smouldering like incense ; sprays of heliotrope and mignonette, torn off by the passing knives, lay tossed upon the green mounds, withering. In the hottest regions of the garden enormous poppies, erect under the blaze, dropped at moments their heavy crimson petals ; and, quivering with almost human trepidations, above each heart, so bared, the pollen-weighted stamens hung.'

In the trilogy the prose has become easier and more spontaneous. Even there, however, it is quite intentionally different from conversation and works within a convention which makes no attempt to conceal the fact that it is a convention:

> ' The negro was poking the charcoal with an iron bar, and when a glowing coal of any size fell through the grid he would pick it up and play with it, tossing it high into the air and catching it again. Out of a doorway nearby there stepped a young girl whose extravagantly painted face and bizarre dress showed her to be prepared for the stage. As she came running past, with flashing teeth and glinting eyes and a joggle of her full breasts, the negro reached out an arm like a gorilla's, and caught her half-naked body against his own glistening flesh. For a moment she hung suspended in his clasp ; but he forgot that he was holding a live coal in the other hand, and a second later with a howl he dropped coal and girl together, to hop up and down on his toes, his head thrown back in a grin of mingled amusement and pain. With shrieks of laughter the girl ran on.'

Even here, where there is freshness and spontaneity, the prose (especially in its punctuation) still retains an air of formal control which in itself furthers Myers' intention of civilized comment.

In *Prince Jali* Myers sketches the earlier development of an adult individual, watching his tentative self-shapings, his explorations and re-orientations both in his wider social environment

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and among ' his own type, the type governed by moral fastidiousness, by sensitiveness, and by generosity.'

> ' As he looked out over the lake towards his grandfather's house, a longing to fly back to it seized him. Safety and goodness lay over there. But he could not, it seemed, embrace the good single-heartedly—no, not yet! He must first taste other experiences, so that, when he did reject the world, it should be with the disdain bred of complete knowledge and competence. Before embracing the good, he must be assured that he was doing it out of knowledge and strength. Or was this quibbling? . . . '

Taken as an account of an actual adolescence *Prince Jali* is not convincing, even if allowance is made for the extreme precocity which Jali exhibits, in common with several of Myers' characters. It is especially difficult to believe in when it pictures the non-mature side of adolescence—Jali's delirious play-acting after Gokal's poisoning, for instance, and to some extent, his brief deception by the pseudo-advanced Camp. In its more interesting passages it seems to be a retrospective interpretation of adolescence, in spite of its introspective form:

> ' For the real Jali—who was he? What was he? One really couldn't say. Anyhow he didn't seem to be taking part at all, when it was a question of human intercourse. The true self seemed to be isolated by its own inalienable nature from other true selves. It was appearances that formed the bridge between person and person. Moreover, his true self, the real Jali, was emptiness—was nothing at all. Yes ; even to himself he was an emptiness, a nothingness. And didn't it emerge out of all this that what he was inclined to call real was nothingness itself?
>
> Having pushed his thoughts thus far Jali halted somewhat breathlessly. It seemed to him that he was at last gaining light. To live in and for reality was to dwindle and fade, to accept appearances was to wax fat and grow strong. It was by cultivating the appearances and illusions belonging to the outer man that you not only offered to others but obtained for yourself a substantial and intelligible being.'

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This passage will serve also to illustrate the quasi-musings, half soliloquy from a character and half author's comment, which Myers relies on extensively. This of course is a deliberate convention, in line with the formality of the prose. Myers has no interest in unveiling thoughts 'in their dumb cradles'; his characters not only speak, but think, in fluent and carefully chosen words, and this has to be accepted as a convention, as an implicit recognition of the fact that Myers as author is all the time communicating with you as reader *about* these characters who seem to be talking. At times, as for instance in conveying the rationalizations of Walter and Madeline, the device of quasi-musing is of the utmost value. At other times it reinforces the impression that Myers leans too much upon generalized description and seems too much to abstract from the immediacy of fact and experience. Conversation, for instance, is often reported in the barest indirect form:

> 'But he was boiling with rage, and Ali's curiosity offered him his chance. He set about teasing his questioner with hints and partial disclosures, and then, when he saw that nothing could annoy him more than the naked truth, he looked Ali mockingly in the face and made a bare-faced avowal.'

The same tendency to abstraction appears when Myers, instead of being spontaneously and completely absorbed in an incident, obviously fishes it up to illustrate the theme he is stating in general terms. For instance:

> 'His parents knew as much about him as any parents were likely to have known about such a son. Their love for him and his for them only sharpened his capacity for deceiving them and theirs for being deceived. It was true that besides seeing what he showed them, they saw a little of what he did not mean to show; but it was precisely with that little that he deceived them most. For he almost always knew when he had betrayed himself and would instinctively set about turning that piece of self-betrayal to good account. Thus, when they told him that they proposed to take him to Agra, he simulated pleasure; but his pretence was not good enough, and at once he knew it. Instinctively, therefore, he set about providing them with a misleading

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clue to the nature of his reluctance, pretending, first of all, that he was distressed by the prospect of leaving his boy friend Nazim, and secondly, that he would sadly miss his polo lessons. As a matter of fact he had little affection for Nazim, who bored him ; and as for polo, he detested it.'

Though to my mind this is extremely satisfying, even in this form, it would undoubtedly have been more effective if it had been presented as a happening, and not as an illustration of a general theme. It is too easy to make our own generalized ordering of experience ; from novels we look for order implicit in something like the welter of immediate events.

The frequency of abstract statement in Myers' work cannot, however, be considered in isolation. It is of course bound up with the wide sweep of the novels: the amount of personal history and the number of social contacts that he finds relevant to his themes as they come to expression in the characters ; and the extent of the characters' contact (by means of the plots) with the still wider external world. Concreteness and specificity all the time would overwhelm the theme. But one notices, I think, an increase in concreteness towards the end of each novel when the necessary generalized preparations have been finished. This usually goes together with a sort of crescendo in the plot, so that the books end with superbly concrete and clinching incidents, like the meeting of Nina and Lilian at night, or Gunevati's disclosure of her empty mouth.

What is certain is that when he wants to, Myers is capable of conveying most subtle ideas concretely as well as by description, and that formally reported introspection can be most skilfully blended with the presentation of direct speech and physical action:

' Allen sprang to his feet and gripped the young man by the shoulder.

" What right have *you* to talk in that fashion? " He was livid with anger. " If you want to see Cosmo installed at Eamor, why have you not had the courage to say so? "

" I do now say so! "

" You young fool! " cried Allen, whose voice and aspect had in one moment become positively terrifying. " Do you suppose that I am going to sacrifice Lilian to your folly? "

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Nicholas gazed at him speechless. Allen's voice and Allen's eyes had a significance that pierced down to the depths of his spirit. He received a revelation, and that revelation was the more devastatingly complete for the reason that it gave him no knowledge that was not dormant in his heart already.

With an unconscious movement he wrenched himself free from Allen's grasp, and taking a few steps away, stared blankly into the forest. There was no thought of resistance in his mind now ; there was not even any hostility. His spirit lay submerged under a quiet, ironic sadness. Softly he laughed to himself. Lilian and Allen! Of course! Their love was no dim, uncertain possibility, but a vital, forceful fact. It dominated the whole situation. No wonder poor Allen had lost his patience.'

By focussing in *Prince Jali* upon a genuine individual Myers necessarily shows up would-be sophistication, ' knowledge of the world,' and the emancipation which amounts to rejecting traditional morality in favour of the equally ready-made attitudes of a clique. Jali in this respect is set over against his cousin, whose socially given destiny, timidly accepted, is to be a catamite of the fashionably homosexual Prince. Amar, in *The Near and the Far*, expresses this maturity of outlook:

' Perhaps even she halted, with most of the world, at that stage where immorality still retains a certain glamour. Nor was she sophisticated enough to hold sophistication cheap.'

The coolness of tone in the writing does much to indicate Myers' freedom from emancipation-worship ; describing Jali's first contact with the larger social world, for instance: ' . . . like all children, he could take a pleasure in being scandalized ; and if the vulgarities remained an offence, the improprieties that he observed were an excitement and a pleasure.'

But there is a certain strain involved in remaining genuinely alone and being judged immature and unsophisticated, and some of Myers' best passages deal with the gratifying shock that an individual is always able to administer to a social unit if circumstances force him to reveal himself. This occurs, for example, when Jali has to stagger his elder cousin by confessing his own sexual precocity. More finely the same thing appears in *The*

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Orissers when Allen corners Walter Standish in the train. After a small introductory shock to Walter's nerves he begins:

> ' " Very well! " And Allen paused to bestow upon him a long, strange smile. " Secondly, then," said he, " I would have you know this: Lilian Mayne is my mistress."
>
> This time Walter was really not sure that he had heard aright. " What? What's that? " he stammered.
>
> The abominable grin appeared again. " Mrs. Mayne is my mistress! " Allen repeated, raising his voice.
>
> Walter drew back as if he had been bitten.
>
> " And in the third place—" Allen went on. " But no! On consideration I will hold something in reserve. I have said enough to show that I am in earnest about Eamor. I consider that Lilian has a right to it. She and I need it. We mean to have it."
>
> Walter remained dumb. Every one of his feelings as a gentleman was inexpressibly offended. He was outraged beyond speech.
>
> His perception that Allen was, in some sort, acting a part—and intentionally over-acting it—did nothing to mitigate the shock to his sensibilities. The man was not less of a scoundrel for that, but simply a scoundrel of a more sinister kind. That he should be following a plan of intimidation was bad ; that he should be doing so with brazen openness was worse. His behaviour enforced the conviction that his villainy was not pure mummery, but an illustration—caricatural, if you would, but still a fair enough illustration—of a real villainy underneath.'

There is an elation in this passage, a sort of glee, which reappears when Allen describes the scene to Lilian:

> ' But Lilian still gasped. " Your mistress! And to Walter! before whom I have always been so—so genteel! "
>
> " All the better!" said Allen. " The shock was the greater. You stand before him now as a very Jezebel. And the more genteelly you behave in future, the more his flesh will creep. For all his man-of-the-worldishness, Walter remains very ingenuous at heart ; and sexual misconduct inspires him with a

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particular horror which he is ashamed to confess to." He broke off with a low laugh. "As for his view of me, that leaves nothing to be desired. Nothing upsets Walter so much as a refusal to defer to the ordinary traditions of gentlemanliness. He is at last convinced that I am capable of anything."

"But then . . . "

"What then?"

"Mightn't he . . . "

"Denounce us? Make use of my admissions? Never! Such a decision is entirely foreign to his nature. Do you think his imagination fails to picture the dreadfulness of the scenes that would ensue? No, no! He isn't even tempted to denounce us. He is committed to quite another line. He still firmly refuses to take cognizance of anything that clashes with his benign view of the case. His parting observation to me was that he considered my words about you unspoken." '

It is a glee given by strength, strength coming from insight and moral clearness when they are forced to reveal themselves to the morally muddled.

The Near and the Far takes people who are already capable of individual living and examines their further development. Often it follows up interests touched on in the earlier books. One figure who comes in all the novels is the man who can neither live smoothly with the world nor achieve a stable individuality which satisfies himself. In *The Orissers* it is Cosmo (and perhaps Nicholas too), in *The Clio* Harry, and in the trilogy Hari, during the period of his earlier life which comes to an end in *The Near and the Far*. Hari is more interesting and important than the others in that he develops towards a workable and disciplined individuality and is shown in process of achieving the calm and certainty which are taken for granted in Allen of *The Orissers*. The achievement of stability doesn't of course come about through the individual's compromising with the hostile herd ; the Rajah Amar, trying to combine political opportunism with advanced Buddhist self-discipline, demonstrates the fallacy of supposing that compromise is possible. For Hari the chief line of development involves his sexual life, and *The Near and the Far* here examines with more sensitive thoroughness one of the themes of *The Orissers*, the relation,

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crudely, of sexual desire to love. In *The Orissers* it appears in its adolescent form in Nicholas who said in his heart ' All that lies between animalism and pure intelligence is rubbish ' and who had previously kept himself sexually to women

> ' from whom he was separated by wide differences, social, temperamental, and intellectual. Such a gulf corresponded conveniently with that other gulf, to his sense so profound, between the flesh and the spirit ; and precluded the necessity of pretending to span the latter with a bridge of sentiment. Among men and women at large an emotion, self-judged sublime, was wont, as he knew, to supply a kind of natural arch over the chasm ; and the world generally saw nothing strange in the fact that this emotion found its expression and satisfaction in acts which every impartial element of mind could only regard as absurdly incongruous. This never ceased to be a source of wonder to him. Surely, men, as creatures of the flesh, would do better to repose, confessedly, upon animal nature, whilst enjoying the pleasures of the flesh? Surely the recourse to high sentiment was silly and self-deceptive? Why refuse to discriminate between the things renderable unto Cæsar and the things renderable unto God? Lust was a thing to be recognized, licensed, prized, and despised. The confusion of spiritual motives and sanctions with material motives and sanctions resulted—the evidence was everywhere round him—in a general falsification of values.'

In *The Near and the Far* Hari is shown developing beyond this adolescent problem. When he first appears he is devoting himself by a sort of partial dissociation of personality to a love affair which largely expresses his defiance of socialized values, though it is nevertheless more than that and far more than animality (which also appears in *The Near and the Far* in Gokal and Gunevati) ; in the words of another character when it ended ' it had been a romance and not a mere loveless gallantry.' Hari, unlike Cosmo and Harry, is capable of submitting to the painful process of reintegrating his personality, and the latter part of the novel is concerned with his advance to more complete sexual love. He remains an individual, now far more independent of society than before, since he derives no simple pleasure from defying it ; instead

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he faces thorny problems of personal relationships which call for self-responsibility and genuinely individual moral decisions.

Plasticity and a willingness to re-examine his experience, which are stressed as necesary conditions for Jali's development, are evident too in the development of Myers' interests and beliefs in these novels. *The Orissers* ends with Lilian and Allen acquiescing in a curious condition of unsatisfactory stability, in which he realizes that

> 'he had no fundamental need of her. All that he needed, fundamentally, was his work. He had never been—he never would be—dependent on human relationships. So he left her too free. She was attaining to a self-sufficiency which went further than his. He needed the world of time and matter as stuff from which to distil the abstraction of his thought. She, like an Indian Yogi, was learning to need nothing. And this detachment of her inmost self from the seduction of persons and things, was the more baffling in that it proceeded concurrently with a ready obedience to the demands of everyday life.'

Thus at the end of an already long novel Myers raises another fundamental question, one that is related to the problems of sex and love which interweave themselves with the main theme of the novel.

In *The Near and the Far* he takes up this situation again and now faces it more clearly and seriously. Allen's absorption in his work is carried to its conclusion in Amar's decision to retire from the world and leave his wife. His wife, Sita, has the same still placidity and self-sufficiency as Lilian. They are experiments in living which Myers watches with delicate insight ; they are, of course, our own potential states of being. Amar cannot be said to fail (the trilogy is not yet complete), but he becomes, for all our sympathy, unenviable. Sita is faced with the challenge to develop further, as though Lilian were being challenged to come back to life, and Myers shows the fears and conflicts in her that lead finally to her effort of development when she decides to break up her calm self-isolation for Hari.

It will be clear that in *The Near and the Far* Myers is using his characters as projections of sets of impulses and possible ways

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of life, all extremely different but highly relevant to each other: some are incompatible and a choice must be made, some conflict but challenge resolution. Simple animality in Gunevati, for instance, with Gokal unstably monopolized by a philosophical mind—their meeting and clash ; Hari, as a rebel and a romantic (but not unrelated either to Gokal or Gunevati) with Sita too calmly poised—their growth towards a finer harmony.

The close relevance of the characters within the framework of the themes allows Myers to use more successfully here than elsewhere his device of making one character comment on another. In *The Orissers* where (at its most extreme) Allen explains Nicholas to himself with a footnote to the relevant psychological article, and Nicholas draws from his pocket and reads to Allen an essay on Madeline, the speaking character tends to become a mouthpiece for the author. In *The Near and the Far,* however, the comments of Amar on Gokal, Gokal on Amar, or Sita on Hari all reflect back effectively on to the speaker and contribute more to the developing situation than their explicit meaning.

Although it seems useful to attempt a bare indication of the themes of Myers' work it should not be supposed that much of the novel is conveyed in this way. For one thing the rich interweaving of subordinate interests is neglected. For another, one would not imagine from the kind of theme he concerns himself with that his plots would allow of thrilling intrigue and exciting denouements. In fact, however, Myers offers the curious combination of a devotion to the subtleties of social life that suggests Henry James, with the sort of plot that suggests a detective story. It might seem that the plot was merely added on as further entertainment for the reader, and we perhaps ought not to thrust it aside ungratefully on that account. It probably has, however, a good deal more significance than that. It serves first to make it evident that the conflicting scale of values and the independent moral judgment of Myers' characters have their material relevance and are not merely speculative constructions for private entertainment. Allen, for instance, has to commit murder and by means of forging a letter to entangle the impeccable Walter in it. Jali's commerce with Gunevati and Hari's romance bring them into strategic positions in imperial politics, and their personal feelings become highly relevant to the safety and material prosperity of

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themselves and their friends. This, in fact, is the discovery that Jali makes when he realizes that his own people are on his side of a gulf that separates them spiritually from the others, and that they are nevertheless set inexorably in the external world:

> 'There was some comfort in the thought that he himself might be almost as odious as Daniyal, because then he would not be so hopelessly out of place in the world, nor suffering misery that was undeserved. On the other hand, the world did certainly contain *some* unquestionably nice people. He came back to that with a conviction that was unshakable. His father and mother, Hari and Gokal—they *were* superior to the inmates of the camp. And what about their position?
>
> It suddenly came over him with impassioned feeling that nothing else mattered so much.'

Apart from this significance of the plots, they are in effect so bound up with the characters and the themes that separate consideration of them is hardly possible. Walter's entanglement in the murder, for example, can only come about through his own dishonesty and capacity for rationalization. And when Lilian presses Walter into her service by sending a revolver shot through his window in the dead of night after she has discovered Nina tampering with the documents, the melodrama clinches the subtler spiritual relationships among the three characters. It is perhaps one of the most curious aspects of Myers' work that he succeeds in making such subtle themes of personal feeling integral with such violent events of material and public life.

The worth of Myers' work ought perhaps to be regarded as largely independent of one's opinion of the novels as works of art, where judgments may differ widely ; essentially they are means of communicating, and they would still be of remarkable value if you concluded that they were scientific essays of an unusual kind. Their first value lies in the fact that they do succeed—by whatever means—in conveying extremely clear and sensitive insight into the conditions of adult and self-responsible lives in a civilized society.

D. W. HARDING.

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THE RETURN OF ODYSSEUS

My disappointments, large as capsized tugs,
Pull no more the big ship of love.
My eye of fire, motionable coal,
That saw such salutations of the wharf
(And piped a hoot to the woman's tooting colours)
Is out, and weeps annual delugings ;
My engines bucked and wrung. My
Timbers' splinters plaything water patterns,
My sturdy and few tons have gone to roost
Under the infant waters of the sea,
That never grew to man's curious abyss,
Nor walked a brain in the aching shape of dream
Along the narrow deck of singing timber:
What a boisterous business, to be a guide.
But in the nest of nature's slippery scope,
(Where of God the pressure is so tight)
Elongate eyes like spears would be
Would spasm the cranky juice of hatred's darlings,
Spend the volatile dyes of woman's dress,
Precurser of the sorrow's end. Unheard
The cock in the waters crows, Good Night,
There is nothing to do but be swayed by the sea.

While with gynæcologistic hands
My hempen fingers purged, I had eased
To birth my iron monstrous love.

RICHARD EBERHART.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

MEANS TO SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

The success of journals seems to vary inversely with their efficacy as exchanges of opinion. Its solemn façade of decorum in no way conceals the nullity of the *Times*, so evident in the fatuous irrelevance of its correspondence and in the scale of values which gives a change in the rules of a card game equal prominence with international affairs. And the complacency and obtuseness of the *Observer* is more depressing than the calculated irresponsibility of the *Daily Express*. The state of affairs at the other extreme is to be judged from the fate of the relatively lively *Weekend Review*, the latest casualty in the progressive decay of organs of intelligent opinion. The decay is due not only to the diminution of the reading public, but also to the natural lack of responsibility towards those who cater for its mind. The trouble is that English readers are not only numerically fewer in proportion than in France, but that they have not the literary conscience of the French. Here, people with an interest in literature seem to have no idea of its implications in the matter of buying printed matter. One comes across people who will lament the passing of such-and-such a paper, while during its life they would go to humiliating depths to avoid buying a copy. Journals of opinion lead a precarious existence, even when established, so that it may be in place to review a few educators of social consciousness at the political level.

The Week (6s. per half-year, from 34 Victoria Street, S.W.1) aims at publishing significant news which is censored by the ordinary press. It gives backstairs information about politics and diplomacy, and exposes ramps, from brewers' to arms-manufacturers', and such things as a campaign to make the public Easter-conscious, and the reasons for the Beaverbrook attack on the Co-ops. It also points to facts which one might discover for oneself, given the time—the fact that the *Daily Herald* itself emasculated a recent speech censored by the B.B.C. Many of its items are of a kind common in the *New Republic*, and occasionally it covers the same ground as the *New Statesman* and the *New Leader*. It has sometimes seemed rather hasty in jumping to

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conclusions or in printing exciting but unestablished news-items. While it seems prone to detect sinister moves everywhere, it would not be easy to convict it of alarmism. In spite of a tense-staccato manner, it often wastes words. But it's an anemometer one would not like to lose ; perhaps the best recommendation it could have is that one often finds oneself referring to it in conversation. It has a relevance outside politics.

The Twentieth Century, now being reconstituted, aims at giving coherence to ' progressive ' movements. It is not very clear where it wants to progress to, or what concerns are relevant. Nor is ' sexual reform ' an encouraging sign. But it has provided a platform for at least one pertinent debate, on the relation between art and politics. A periodical capable of perceiving that there is some such relationship, and of enforcing the perception by giving serious attention to contemporary literature in articles and reviews, is justified. [Since this was written the news has come that *The Twentieth Century* is starting again as a quarterly. See advertisement.]

Someone may say that while dealing with non-commercial and disinterested organs I should mention *The Listener* ; and it certainly must be given credit for advertising good causes (the C.P.R.E., for example) and for drawing attention to such problems as the slums. And occasionally one learns through it of organizations and periodicals which would otherwise have remained unheard of. Its reviews are sometimes adequate. I have heard *The Listener* damned on the ground that with its subsidy and backing it has cut away the ground from beneath the weekly reviews, and the complaint introduces one serious objection. People with intellectual pretensions take a weekly, and generally only one ; and they may innocently take *The Listener* on the assumption that they are getting something of the same kind as, say, the *New Statesman*. (It would, by the way, be useful in the sixth-forms of schools to compare the two papers, with others added if practicable.) A comparison of the two, it may be objected, is unfair to *The Listener*, since it has not the same aims as the older weekly. But that doesn't invalidate the contention that in effect it does compete with more serious journals. And if it hasn't aims of the same kind as the latter, it ought to, as a publication of the B.B.C., whose policy is ' educational.' No

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one will quarrel with the policy: it is the practice of the organization behind *The Listener* that needs examining. For the moment, one can only ask what would happen if the B.B.C. started out to be really educational. (A pointer is to be found in a March issue of *The Week* which reported business alarm at the ' radical ' tendencies of *The Listener*.) If it supplied the deficiencies of the press by casting light on armament and advertising rackets? There are a dozen ways in which *The Listener* and the B.B.C. could do pioneer work that no other agency could attempt, especially of the kind demanding co-operation between the B.B.C. and listener. It's easy to imagine the storm that would be stirred up by an attempt by the B.B.C. ' to put our wave of progress in its place,' to give uneducated listeners some critical understanding of their environment. I am not suggesting that the B.B.C. should propagate a party programme ; merely that we very badly need any forum for the exchange of views on politics, and for keeping in sight the *porro unum necessarium* of politics. As it is, *The Listener* is compassless, with its carefulness and fatal diffusion of topic, necessary because it acts as chameleon to the B.B.C., as the B.B.C. to democracy. A letter in the *New Statesman* once said that that paper was banned in a school on account of its radical tendency. One cannot imagine that happening to *The Listener*. Its readers want something pre-digested.

Social consciousness at the level of politics is inadequate, as a glance at Mr. Charques' book (cf. March *Scrutiny*) or the new *Clarion* will suggest. This latest enterprise of the Odhams Press is virtually a weekly edition of the *Herald*, somewhat less vulgar and keener-edged, but with that air of blank impersonal efficiency associated with large commercial undertakings. Its suitable reader will, I imagine, feel that he is relieved of his responsibility, that plenty of people are really getting on with it, and that he needn't bother any more. Though its political matter may be good, it is not easy to see how a genuine social consciousness can be formed by a paper which every week gives Mr. Priestley a page to play with. As one might have guessed, his first contribution included a write-up of Mr. Walpole. If anything can prevent a country attaining a social conscience, it is the attitude formed by the reading of such comforting novelists. In the second issue, by the way, Mr. Priestley's latest book was written up by Mr. Beverley Nichols. There is an idea

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current among people who need no assistance in placing these writers that *English Journey* and the latter's *Cry Havoc* are justified on the ground that they let in light upon that substratum of the reading public which never comes across anything vital in its comforting literature, which would never be reached by the various intelligent man's guides to war and poverty. But observation makes me very sceptical about the results of reading these two books. Do they really mobilize public opinion on the topics they discuss? Does anything really happen in the mind of their suitable reader?

Cry Havoc I have not read through, because after an attempt I felt that I had read it all before. Perhaps this is unfair to Mr. Nichols, but it gave the impression that it had been hastily put together after a reading of *What will be the Character of a New War?*, *The Secret International*, some of Sir Norman Angell's work and some peace society propaganda, Mr. Nichols' own contribution being the sentimentality. The reaction of the average reader at the horror parts of these two popular books is likely to be the usual attraction-repulsion mixture, followed by a return to the really important interests of his life: golf, bridge and motoring. Though I've heard it claimed for *Cry Havoc* that for the young (at school) it is a good introduction to its topics.

Perhaps Mr. Gollancz, in setting Mr. Priestley the task of writing *English Journey*, imagined that he was going to add one more to his many useful publications on economics, politics, social conditions, at a more popular level, reaching a fresh public with Mr. Priestley's reputation. Certainly one of his advertisements claim that the book gives shocks to complacency, etc. Which is exactly what it never does. *Cry Havoc* was by comparison a muscular book. But *English Journey* was reviewed with equal enthusiasm by the *New Leader* and the *Yorkshire Post*; this could not happen to Hutt's *Condition of the Working Class* (Martin Lawrence) or Brockway's *Hungry England*. If his field had been limited to an account of life in the towns on and between the Tees and Tyne, a tolerable piece of reporting might have resulted, because Mr. Priestley really has a good journalist talent. No one has done for this country what Mr. Wilson did for the U.S. in *Devil Take the Hindmost*, or Mr. Chase in *The Nemesis of American Business*. As it is, there is an excess of tedious anec-

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dotage about buses and razors, bumbling about pubs, romanticizing about the beauty of liners, and so on. The book is uninformed and shallow: he visits a mass-production factory, and comments on the process, ' It is all very strange, rather frightening ' (p. 94) ; visits another, ' It is queer, rather frightening ' (p. 130). And p. 94 again, ' You have to shut your imagination off, or you might go mad.' Tut, tut. Such clairvoyance is about the limit of Mr. Priestley's disquietude. And he should keep off sociology, if this is the best he can do:

> ' But when one gets at the facts, they always disprove these head-shaking statements about cheap popular amusements driving this and that out of men's lives. You find on enquiry that men are still mounting hobby-horses as gaily as ever. Many people forget that the patrons of cheap popular amusements, the cinema and the wireless and so on, have come largely from a class of persons that before did nothing in its leisure but gossip and yawn and kick the cat and twiddle its thumbs.' (p. 128).

Incidentally he appears to contradict this on p. 132, one of the three or four good pages in one large sop for the complacent. Mr. Priestley is not an old humbug—many of his comments would do credit to a barber or a barman. But horse-sense alone never got anyone very far, and an ' English classic ' really should be more careful to conceal his incapacity. Social critic is not his role. It's partly the fault of the reviewers for jacking him up so high ; it was too bad of them. I imagine even Mr. Priestley laughed when he heard this kind of thing: ' I consider its publication a national event and shall be surprised and disappointed if it does not find its way in the next six months into the hands of every thinking reader in this country . . . It is an English classic, and its subject is not only the England we live in, but the better England that must come.' Thus the President of Magdalen does his duty in the *Book Society News*.

There may be other books of the kind to come. (Mr. Walpole is always in the fore in respectable Youth Movements.) Popularizations of this kind may be a nuisance. They do nothing to inform or mobilize public opinion, or to canalize good-will ; instead they're likely to act as a hindrance, by fostering complacency and by queering the pitch for serious books covering similar ground.

D.T.

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AUDEN, BOTTRALL AND OTHERS

POEMS, Second edition with some new poems, by W. H. Auden (Faber & Faber, 5/-).

THE DANCE OF DEATH, by W. H. Auden (Faber & Faber, 2/6d.).

FESTIVALS OF FIRE, by Ronald Bottrall (Faber & Faber, 5/-).

THE LOOSENING AND OTHER POEMS, by Ronald Bottrall (Minority Press, Agent—Heffer, 3/6d.).

RECENT POETRY 1923-1933, Edited with an Introduction by Alida Monro (The Poetry Bookshop and Gerald Howe, Ltd., 5/-).

ELEGIES AND SONGS, by John Mavrogordato (Cobden-Sanderson, 2/-).

VARIATIONS ON A TIME THEME, by Edwin Muir (Dent, 2/6d.).

SUMMIT AND CHASM, by Herbert Palmer (Dent, 5/-).

SPRING ENCOUNTER, by John Pudney (Methuen, 2/6d.).

THE END OF A WAR, by Herbert Read (Faber & Faber, 2/6d.).

THE ROAD TO RUIN, by Siegfried Sassoon (Faber & Faber, 2/6d.).

DIFFICULT MORNING, by Randall Swingler (Methuen, 2/6d.).

JACK AND JILL, by W. J. Turner (Dent, 2/6d.).

This list contains the names of two poets of decided gift—W. H. Auden and Ronald Bottrall. Both of them are included in Mrs. Monro's anthology. So is T. S. Eliot, and so are W. B. Yeats and Walter De La Mare. So also are Humbert Wolfe, the Sitwell family (all three) and Richard Aldington. Those capable of reading the anthology appreciatively will, it may be ventured, already know their Yeats and Eliot, and will have no use for these extracts from the thumbed and annotated volumes. And such readers will long ago have made up their minds about the Sitwells, Mr. Wolfe and Mr. Aldington. It is improbable, too,

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that they will not already know of Auden and Bottrall ; in any case, it will be a rare and odd chance when such random and inadequate representation in so heterogeneous an assemblage ' introduces ' these writers to anyone capable of following the introduction up.

No one who sees the point of these not very subtle or new observations will suppose me to be distinguishing this anthology as particularly bad. ' Poets of decided gift,' of course, are not the only verse-writers that an intelligent interest in contemporary poetry will need to take note of. But this is not a concession in favour of anthologies (even if one could imagine them undertaken by critics). The serious practitioner who is not decidedly a talent may be worth looking at, but only if a good body of his verse is to hand at a time can he be expected to yield anything.

Of the volumes listed above, Mr. Palmer's will be laid aside at once—to say this indicates sufficiently the assumptions (or prejudices) connoted by the phrase ' a serious interest in contemporary poetry.' When reviewers hail him with relief and conviction as a ' genuine poet,' ' major poet,' ' one of the noblest ' living, and so on, they mean that he gives them just the kind of thing they know poetry to be (even though a conventional salute to the ' pylon poets ' may nowadays be *de rigueur*). They mean that he is the same kind of poet as Mr. G. K. Chesterton, as indeed he is, though he has less afflatus:

> Shaking his silver curls into the wind
> God sat in council with the seraphim
> And every archangel and earl of Heaven . . .

and

> All that is nobly beautiful or true
> Is very simple, simple as a song,
> Like silver lettering on a sky of blue ;
> The disordered, complex thing is often wrong.

This kind of simplicity may be appropriately put by in company with the ' disordered, complex thing ' (as no doubt both Mr. Aldington and Mr. Palmer see it) of Mr. Aldington:

> mediocre women in dull clothes—
> their nudity a disaster—

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heavy cunning men (guts and passbooks),
relics of gentry, workmen on bicycles,
puffy small whores, baby carriages,
shops, newspapers, bets, cinemas, allotments . . .
These are your blood ; their begetters
made in the same bed as yours
(horror of copulation),
colossal promiscuity of flesh through centuries
etc.

The only point of these elementary judgments is to bring out the force of saying that most of the writers listed above are in some way interesting: they may be read seriously as attempting to express sensibilities of our time in verse. This applies, for instance, to Mr. Herbert Read's little book, distinguishing it decisively from the companion one by Mr. Siegfried Sassoon (though this is not to say that Mr. Sassoon's verses may not have, in certain social *milieux*, their function). One judges Mr. Sassoon to be indubitably sincere ; but when one speaks of Mr. Read's ' sincerity,' one means a great deal more by the attribution. One has in mind a certain fine tension, a certain unmistakable effort to realize, and to fix with precision, representative subtleties of intimate personal experience. And yet, while intensely respecting Mr. Read (as always when war is his theme), I cannot say that I think *The End of a War* successful poetry. The intended subtle complexity of feeling (the intention is obvious enough) does not seem to me realized in the verse ; it is not acted, done, given, in concrete particularity and compelled upon the reader, but pointed to, for his acquiescent and too general recognition.

' Many poets,' runs the Introduction to *Recent Poetry*, ' have been included because, although their technique cannot be described as definitely modern in the accepted sense of the word, nevertheless their approach to, and treatment of, their subjects is entirely new.' It is a disastrous sentence. No doubt the ' technique ' both of Mr. Aldington and Miss Sitwell is ' definitely modern in the accepted sense of the word,' but ' technique ' in that sense has no bearing on the problems of poets. On the other hand one is certainly looking in modern verse for something distinctively modern—a modernity, say, of ' approach ' and ' treatment,' and the modernity of approach and treatment that

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doesn't manifest itself in technique invites a comment of the form of that just passed on Mr. Read: a comment, that is, on the gap between intention and realization. What one is looking for is a handling of words that registers a pressure of sensibility, and a sensibility that is not decidedly of its time will hardly be of a kind to exert a commanding pressure—to have that peculiar individual intensity that manifests the poet. Verse that falls short of exhibiting such an intensity may still be interesting. Mr. Pudney and Mr. Swingler, for instance, are decidedly enough of their time and seriously enough interested in poetic technique to be read with an attention that one cannot give to Mr. Aldington, the Sitwells, Mr. Humbert Wolfe and a number more of the authors represented in Mrs. Monro's anthology.

If there is not a 'definitely modern' technique, one might gather from the explicit preoccupations of Mr. Auden, Mr. Bottrall, Mr. Mavrogordato, Mr. Muir and Mr. Turner that there is at any rate what could without too violent an abstraction be called a distinctively modern mode of contemplating life—that which dictated the use of anthropological themes in *The Waste Land*, and, for all their protests, relates Eliot and Lawrence. 'It would be impossible to turn it all into grammatical prose,' says Mr. Mavrogordato of his verse, 'but . . . the images of islands meeting at the roots of the mountains under the sea, of individual minds uniting far down below the level of consciousness, of leaves on the tree being members one of another, of all animals branching from one trunk and root are obvious fingerposts.' A 'mode of contemplating life,' however, has, as something abstract and general, no great interest for the critic of poetry; he has his eye rather upon technique, for it is in a successful technique that concrete particularity of realization is manifested. But any precision that the term 'technique,' here, may seem to have is illusory, and perhaps it is better to say of Mr. Mavrogordato's verse that it remains too general, that it nowhere has the convincing particular life that would prove him a poet, that the difference between it and a paraphrase of it in 'grammatical prose' is not significant enough.

If Mr. Muir's technique is less 'definitely modern in the accepted sense of the word,' that appears as a certain advantage. For while he does not prove himself more decidedly a poet than

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Mr. Mavrogordato, he has an unpretentious integrity, a quietly intent seriousness, that recommends him at once: the kind of thing offered is plain from the first page, and it is a kind of thing for which those interested in poetry may have a place in their reading. *Variations on a Time Theme* is hardly poetry ; it is rather a poetic meditation *upon* certain modern themes—one might almost say ' essay about them.' Not that the verse form is unjustified, but that there is a distance between verse and theme ; the theme is always pointed to rather than grasped and presented. The nature of the intention may be gathered from the reminiscences of *The Waste Land* and Mr. Eliot in general (in these opening lines, for instance, *Gerontion* is there):

> After the fever this long convalescence,
> Chapped blood and growing pains, waiting for life
> [' the cruellest month,' ' waiting for rain ']

The comparison (as severe a test as can be imagined) invoked by such reminiscences enforces the difference between intention and realization. Mr. Eliot's verse presents, in particular immediacy, complex, varying and intensely realized feelings, states of consciousness, qualities of experience. The feeling in Mr. Muir's verse is meditative, and doesn't vary a great deal ; it is general, and not sharply defined. It is clear that he is apt to take for particularity, for personal realization, what is really unconscious reminiscence:

> Forty years this burning
> Circuitous path, feet spurning
> The sliding sand and turning
> The wheel, turning again
> Sharp rock, soft dust, a land
> Choked in sand.
>
> We have passed great kingdoms by
> In a separate dream.
> Have seen tame birds wheel homing through the sky,
> And towers caught in a distant gleam,
> And smelt the searching scent of roots, the moist and dry,
> And stopped remembering,
> In this hard torrid winter without spring,
> Something once tender and green,

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But wakening we have seen,
At the waste's ruined bounds,
Pale whirlwinds racing round like spectral hounds,
And falling through the air with whispering sounds.

There is no need to point out where in *What the thunder said,* other parts of *The Waste Land, The Hollow Men,* and the Ariel poems each item comes from: the case, a familiar type, of illusory inspiration is plain. It would be unfair to suggest that Mr. Muir is characteristically a victim in this degree; nevertheless such instances are enough to enforce the judgment that, though the themes of his verse are obviously presented by a sincere and sensitive mind, this verse does not present a sharply realized, particular sensibility; without an altogether finer and intenser critical awareness there could hardly be even a start towards the technique necessary for success in such an enterprise—success, that is, being poetry.

Mr. Turner's *Jack and Jill* might with even greater appropriateness be called a poetic essay; the distance between verse and theme is more striking—to say which is to pay a tribute to the conviction with which Mr. Turner writes verse. The verse is very decidedly poetical; at this date, daringly so. This, from the first page, is clearly by the author of *In Time Like Glass*:

The prowling company
Of earthly lions, ever wandering on
Earth's tawny sands, a starry progeny,
Grew fainter in its light, their howling rings
Fading like twisted smoke in generations
About the human camp-fires. The mask stayed on
Amid its semblances and shades of those who drew,
All dwindling, from the fountain of their love.

It is perhaps permissible to say without bothering about definitions that this, with its melodious play of glamorous associations, is romantic. We are not surprised to find that Mr. Turner can (wittingly) invoke the Shakespeare of the sonnets, and use with conviction an Elizabethan mode of passionate 'wit':

Such feeble rhapsodies the poet's brain
Inflamed by Jill no longer can contain.

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And he'd despair were he not part of nature
Ever to picture her in any feature.
Is she not fair? That she is fair all know.
Has she not guile? none ever had it so.
Is she not wicked?

Tortured he would desire her black as night
Assyrian-curled and with blood-bannered lip ;
On her hard will dashing his diamond light
To sink the flag of her high-breasted ship ;
Or, like a dark rock on the desert sand
Obliterate her small and solid shape
With blasting sunlight.

The ironic note of the first passage, it will be observed, is Byronic. Mr. Turner's verse and his poetic sensibility, then, being of this kind and his theme Brave New World and the escape from it, the achievement may be fairly described as a poetic essay: the substance of such a theme could not, in such a medium, be given ; it can only be pointed to. Not that there is no feeling in the verse ; but it is specialized (and generalized) poetic feeling, applied to the theme from outside.

With these critical observations and instances as a background, the nature of the distinction attributed to Mr. Auden and Mr. Bottrall should now be plain, and it should be possible to go on to make adverse comment on them without being thought to deny the distinction. They demand criticism at an altogether different level from the others—as indubitable talents, capable, on a convincing measure of proof, of expressing sensibilities of our time in poetry.

The second edition of Mr. Auden's *Poems* is an opportunity for reconsidering his ' Charade,' which still, I think, represents his talent at its most impressive. I remember the prolonged indecision with which I read and re-read *Paid on Both Sides* when, three years ago, I was writing the last chapter of a book on modern poetry. It seemed impossible to offer an account of it that shouldn't have the effect of taking away more than it granted, so in the end I said nothing. That was perhaps too easy a solution, though even now critical appraisal presents itself as a delicate undertaking.

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Fortunately I have turned up an appraising comment by Mr. Empson (it appeared in a Cambridge organ, *Experiment*, in Spring, 1931), and see a possible approach by comment on that.

Mr. Empson starts by outlining the plot, which, he justly observes, is not obvious on first reading, so that we may gratefully accept his help:

> ' There is a blood-feud, apparently in the North of England, between two mill-owning families who are tribal leaders of their workmen ; it is at the present day, but there are no class distinctions and no police. John, the hero of the play, is born prematurely from shock, after the death by ambush of his father ; so as to be peculiarly a child of the feud. As a young man he carries it on, though he encourages a brother who loses faith in it to emigrate. Then he falls in love with a daughter (apparently the heiress) of the enemy house ; to marry her would involve ending the feud, spoiling the plans of his friends, breaking away from the world his mother takes for granted, and hurting her by refusing to revenge his father. Just before he decides about it, a spy, son of the enemy house (but apparently only her half-brother) is captured ; it is the crisis of the play ; he orders him to be taken out and shot. He then marries Anne ; she tries to make him emigrate, but he insists on accepting his responsibility and trying to stop the feud ; and is shot on the wedding day, at another mother's instigation, by a brother of the spy.
>
> This much, though very compressed, and sometimes in obscure verse, is a straightforward play. But at the crisis, when John has just ordered the spy to be shot, a sort of surrealist technique is used to convey his motives. They could only, I think, have been conveyed in this way, and only when you have accepted them can the play be recognized as a sensible and properly motivated tragedy.'

' The play,' Mr. Empson says (the author's word, I think it worth noting, is ' charade '), ' is " about " the antinomies of the will, about the problems involved in the attempt to change radically a working system ' ; and the analysis in which he elaborates this account is characteristically subtle. But I must, at the

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cost of unfairness, pass it over, and come to Mr. Empson's concluding paragraph:

> 'One reason the scheme is so impressive is that it puts psycho-analysis and surrealism and all that, all the irrationalist tendencies which are so essential a part of the machinery of present-day thought, into their proper place; they are made part of the normal and rational tragic form, and indeed what constitutes the tragic situation. One feels as if at the crisis of many, perhaps better, tragedies, it is just this machinery which has been covertly employed. Within its scale (twenty-seven pages) there is the gamut of all the ways we have of thinking about the matter; it has the sort of completeness that makes a work seem to define the attitude of a generation.'

The work that could evoke this response is beyond question a remarkable one. But—all that in twenty-seven pages! And, going back again and again to the Charade, I found that the process of applying Mr. Empson's eludication remained preponderantly one of adding it on. In short, it is one of those cases in which the strength of the author of *Ambiguity* (and that handful of remarkable poems) appears as a weakness. I do not, while thus making a critical convenience of Mr. Empson, throw out an ungracious reflection as a mere wanton aside, but because I see in it a means of doing critical justice to Mr. Auden. Mr. Auden's strength, then, is to have just what Mr. Empson appears to lack: a profound inner disturbance; a turbid pressure of emotions from below; a tension of impulsive life too urgent and shifting to permit him the sense of intellectual mastery. As a poet he is too immediately aware of the equivocal complexity of his material, and too urgently solicited by it, to manipulate it with cool insistence into firm definition and deliberately coherent elaboration. He has nevertheless achieved enough in the matter of technique to impress upon the reader a highly individual sensibility.

But Mr. Empson's account, though it testifies to the force of this impression, extravagantly overstates the achievement—misrepresents, indeed, the pretension. 'So that the play is "about" the antinomies of the will, about the problems involved in the attempt to change radically a working system.'—This doesn't misrepresent the nature of Mr. Auden's preoccupations, but it is not

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for nothing that, as noted before, he calls *Paid on Both Sides* not a ' play ' but a ' charade.' The term intimates plainly enough that the claim to dramatic status is not to be taken too seriously ; the preoccupations are serious enough, but Mr. Auden does not deceive himself as to the degree in which he has attained dramatic projection, dramatic impersonality. A ' charade ' is for domestic performance—' domestic,' here, in a very special sense : to attempt actual stage-production would be to misconceive the strength of what is offered.

This is not to deny that Mr. Auden has achieved a certain dramatic impressiveness—he has ; but the drama remains not much more than merely schematic. Moreover, it appears to owe its vigour largely to a set of interests that have a romantic tinge—that belong less to maturity than those indicated by Mr. Empson. That blood-feud, those ' tribal leaders,' and the action among those taking northern place-names retain something of the spirit of the schooldays to which they clearly point back. Not that maturity cannot draw upon such sources ; that he can do so, indeed, is one of the most promising things about Mr. Auden's talent. The criticism is that he has not sufficiently organized his interests ; that they are not sufficiently subordinated to his most serious intention ; and, in short, that *Paid on Both Sides* expresses an essential uncertainty of purpose and of self in a very different way from that suggested by Mr. Empson.

It is an immediately relevant observation that the obscurity Mr. Empson notes in Mr. Auden's verse is very different from that of Mr. Empson's. The difference might be described as that between working things out (Mr. Empson's way) and letting them work themselves out. It is Mr. Auden's advantage that he can so much (as it were) leave things to happen. Nevertheless, there must be intensive critical labour if such problems as his are to be solved—' Probably, indeed, the larger part of the labour of an author in composing his work is critical labour ; the labour of sifting, combining, constructing, expunging, correcting, testing . . . ' (T. S. Eliot). It is impossible to avoid the conviction that Mr. Auden is prone to be too easily satisfied with what comes. An intensity of feeling carries off the obscurities in the best verse of the Charade, but in the accompanying poems the freedoms of transition and private association appear altogether too casual,

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and there is no evidence of any sustained intensity of preoccupation with technique.

A certain assured personal manner Mr. Auden has indeed invented, but the assurance seems to me to cover something very different. It may be examined in *The Witnesses*, a poem specified by Mrs. Monro for its seriousness. On me the effect is disquietingly analogous to that of Rupert Brooke's irony. Auden, it need hardly be said, works at a very much higher level ; the distinction of his talent is nowhere more apparent than in this kind of work. But so subtle a blend of surface poise and fundamental self-mistrust would seem to indicate the need for a peculiarly resolute critical effort on the part of the poet. Of *The Dance of Death* one can only say that it emphasizes this conclusion. Auden can seldom have written more easily and his subtlety has never been the servant of a more indeterminate intention. He appears to know little better than the characters of his drama what the point of it is ; to be, as far as significance is concerned, along with them. And this is proletarian speech : ' 'E's a bit of orlright, ain't 'e Bill?' That's how *Punch* spells what the proletariat ' sez.' The point may seem a trivial one, yet I think a radical criticism of Mr. Auden's attitude in the matter of ' class ' is involved.

To turn to Ronald Bottrall is to be reminded that there is, for a poet, such a thing as knowing too well what one is doing. A certain tendency to intellectual forcing—to a too imperious determination from above—has always been the weakness accompanying Mr. Bottrall's strength, his tough idiosyncrasy and the resoluteness of his technique. If in appraising *Festivals of Fire* one has to make the criticism with insistence, it is because of the ambitiousness of the undertaking in the poem ; an undertaking that, by reason of its ambitiousness, peculiarly tempts the poet to a wrong exertion of strength, and that, at the same time, is peculiarly disabled by such exertion.

The briefest conclusive way of making the radical criticism on the poem is to point to the lack of rhythmic variety ; a lack all the more obvious because of the insistent idiosyncrasy of Bottrall's rhythms. Such an insufficiency, in a poem the structure of which (as the headings of the parts explicitly tell us) is ' musical,' denotes a gap between intention and realization, between the offered and the actually grasped and given : if the various themes,

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qualities or modes had been adequately realized in the concrete of poetry there would have been, immediately perceivable, a much greater variety of rhythm. This clearly is a radical criticism and has immediate consequences. In *The Waste Land*, with the rhythmic shifts, we pass from datum to datum, each compellingly 'there' and not merely pointed to or schematically represented; and the significance of the poem resides in what stands finally given—the data with their implicit relations. The significance of *Festivals of Fire* does not reside sufficiently in anything given; it is felt as something urged personally by the poet:

> The serpent engirdles
> The earth, mammoth tail juxtaposed to mouth.
> Stealing on, no pace perceived, comes power—
> An I AM in an Aceldama of cross-ribbed
> Girder-spans, a body-rhythm to the
> Ineluctable sliding of connecting rods
> And the swirl of greased shafts. Power to grasp now
> The poise, the gleaming certainty of it,
> The piercingness of the machine. Tools
> At attention, at the *qui vive*,
> Riveted to eternal alacrity.

This may perhaps be a healthier attitude to the world than any that Mr. Eliot's poetry has to offer, but poetry is what we are supposed to be considering, and this conclusion to *Festivals of Fire* involves something like a shift from the plane of poetry to the plane of political manifesto. That the shift is in a sense prepared for by a recurrent weakness of the preceding poetry does not blunt the criticism.

> Tools
> At attention, at the *qui vive*,
> Riveted to eternal alacrity.

—The doubt raised by that 'Riveted' is of a kind one has become familiar with by the time these concluding lines of the poem have been reached. One may decide that the metaphor this time will bear scrutiny; but the following will not:

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Deftly he unloosed
The mechanic arts to men, trickeries
For prolongation of a bootless leisure, built
On a frame of tears.

That ' frame ' was clearly put in from above. It has a good deal of company, and in any case the many dubious instances would themselves compel, by cumulative effect, an adverse judgment. In these local weaknesses we have the same bent that manifests itself in the assertive general intention of the poem, as here:

There are
Enisled men, caught upon the waste
Steppes of war and the frustration
Of desire, forfeiting guerdons
To sip opiates. Crossed
Hands formulate peace, a peace
Rapt from the urgency of Now: banners
Limping in a light breeze, awe-struck.
Vishnu, vidya, manvantara,
Mata Hari, bless my sleep
With a rigmarole
Towards a cozening derailment
Of the body of this flesh.

The influence of the *Cantos*, apparent in the versification and in other ways, seems to me to have reinforced this bent and to be wholly deplorable. Bottrall is drawn towards Pound for reasons that should work the other way: no poet, I think, has much of profit to teach him whose technique is not a matter of delicate response to inner pressure, and whose technical problems are not pre-eminently problems of organizing experience and persuading sensibility to definition. It is the Pound of *Mauberley* whose beneficent influence appears in the verse of *The Loosening and Other Poems*—where (it is a significant fact) there is nothing that looks much like Pound.

That first volume of Bottrall's has not had nearly the attention it deserves: its due representation in a critical anthology of the best modern work would be very impressive. If, however, the present volume contains much less that gives me anything like

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unqualified satisfaction, that is not to say that Bottrall has retrogressed ; he is attempting something much more difficult.

And it is time now to recognize the positive side of the account—the measure of achievement. The main themes from *The Golden Bough* are effectively present enough for their function, and the organization of the poem, to be plain. How the Rimbaud theme is meant to come in is plain too, but it, like various other elements, is pointed to rather than realized. The main themes, however—Fire, mistletoe, Balder and their associates—have the advantage of the magnificent opening page-and-a-half of the poem ; indeed, the whole of the first section (which seems to me the best of the four) is effectively developed. Afterwards, though there is nothing as sustained in achievement as the first section, there is much that tempts to quotation. And, in general, the resort to anthropology is justified in a realization of the Life theme—unity, continuity and renewal, in a communicated sense of the mystery, potent enough to make an implicit criticism on the mechanico-communistic salvationism of the conclusion.

This conclusion itself represents something in Bottrall that is fundamentally a strength: a certain moral energy, a *naïveté* (if this term may be used to denote a virtue), that, along with such intelligence and acquisitiveness, makes one hopeful of his development. In most of the short poems in the volume it is the sophistication that is more apparent. But *On a Grave of the Drowned* is deeply felt and finely achieved (Mrs. Monro did well to choose it), and if *Instructions Before Dinner* is sophisticated, then sophistication can be intensely interesting.

F. R. LEAVIS.

THIRTY PRELIMINARY POEMS, by George Barker (Parton Press, 2/6d.).

ALANNA AUTUMNAL, by George Barker (Wishart, 5/- net).

The failure of uneducated and sophisticated prodigies to comprehend *Ulysses*, and all that Joyce implies, may continue to produce prose of the kind, but rarely of the quality to be found in *Alanna Autumnal*. This is an infuriating book: pretentious,

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viciously romantic and ' finished '—simply because it compels judgment by the severest possible standards. The author tells us more than once he is ' a poet ' (he is), and that he ' lacks guts ' (he does). But Mr. Barker seems to me to have, not only almost all the faults that yield to treatment, but also almost all the qualities that really matter, and that an academic training might easily unfit one to recognize. Mr. Barker's vision is innocent enough: also uncommonly sensitive and strong: also bogged by precocities and preciosities. His malady is an ingrowing soul ; his virtue, that he has diagnosed it. His prescription is—Excess: he will rage himself out. These two books, more particularly the *Poems*, record the shedding of his worst verbal excesses. (It may be tiresome to repeat it, but *Ode* is the only completely successful poem he has made ; it is also his *Innisfree* and less interesting than some of his major failures.) Belief in the promise of Mr. Barker's prose is strengthened by a recent trifle (*Listener*, May 2nd), *The Swimmers*. Belief in the promise of his verse is amply justified by *Daedalus* (April, 1934 *Criterion*) ; an advance, a flowering of several buds and containing the seeds of half-a-dozen new minor literary movements—in verse, prose, drama. Mr. Barker's work, even at its most verbose, is curiously compact. It has what Eliot has often described as ' intensity ' ; it has something else that might be described as ' substance,' and which I should define as a physical (almost tactile, as opposed to cerebral) apprehension of the word. There is nothing one could tell Mr. Barker, about his work, that he does not know painfully well. It may be hoped that when he has finished sweating out his latinisms he will ' donate ' (a favourite word) some of his attention to his worst vice—exploitation of his own pathos. He deserves watching by those who are least likely to be aware of him:—*e.g.* those who press, as well as those who would suppress, the work of Mr. Bottrall. Mr. Barker's fame has been broadcast, and I know of no writer of his age who deserves so much to be saved from the demoralization of early winnings. Both of these books may be called—without offence—bad books.

HUGH GORDON PORTEUS.

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SHAKESPEARE CRITICISM

ART AND ARTIFICE IN SHAKESPEARE, A Study in Dramatic Illusion and Contrast, by Elmer Edgar Stoll (Cambridge University Press, 7/6d.).

There is a constant tendency in criticism towards the eccentric, and when time has familiarized the eccentricity ('Pope was no poet but a man of wit') unusual effort is required to demonstrate the inadequacy of 'accepted truth.' The importance of Professor Stoll is that he is one of those who have most clearly defined the eccentricity of a hundred and fifty years of Shakespeare criticism: 'The play has been thought to be a psychological document, not primarily a play . . . and the characters have been taken for separable copies of reality.' Whereas, indeed, 'The plot is not so much a part of the characters as they are parts of the plot'; convention is more important than verisimilitude. This is salutary, and the account of Elizabethan dramatic conventions, both here and in *Shakespeare Studies*,[1] forms an admirable corrective to the vagaries of 19th century criticism.

But in the present book Professor Stoll claims to offer something more than a corrective; he is 'intent upon the positive': and it is of some importance that those who sympathise with his attacks on Romantic criticism (and have profited from them) should make plain the serious imperfections of his positive method, should explain why this very efficient gravedigger is an untrustworthy sponsor.

The four main chapters of *Art and Artifice* deal with the four great tragedies, and the chapter on *Hamlet* is by far the best. This is significant: *Hamlet* (can one still be misunderstood on this point?) is, as a work of art, imperfect; requires therefore more external explanation than the other three. Besides, partly for this reason, *Hamlet* has occasioned so many critical aberrations, even in the greatest of critics, that the work of destruction is both easier and more necessary than in the case of *Othello, Lear,* or *Macbeth*. Professor Stoll undermines the precarious Romantic

[1]The Macmillan Company (1927), $4.

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structures with gusto, but he offers nothing in their place. Of his positive judgments this, of *Othello*, is a fair sample: 'Since the tragedy does not, like the classical French, spring directly out of the hero's and heroine's own bosoms, it is, in its development, as in its origin, not a psychological study; but it is a more vivid imaginative spectacle, is—" like the Pontic Sea "—a more irresistible dramatic current. It is a story . . . it is a series of incidents, which show different aspects of the passion, and various stages of it, along its course; it is an *emotional* development—an eclipse, then an earthquake, then an avalanche.' Beyond this seismological account there is no hint of what the emotional development—the poetry—is. At the end, 'As his free soul . . . thus shines forth again . . . there is such an effect, heightened by music, as the theatre had not known or was again to know.' The vagueness is pervasive; the same inability to seize any but the more obvious features of plot and situation constantly betrays itself. The only effect of Duncan's entry into the castle—that superbly delicate evocation of supernaturally sanctioned natural good—is, it seems, to make the Professor 'sympathetic, anxious and excited . . . It is somewhat the same effect . . . (to speak of lesser matters) as when Sherlock [? Holmes] smokes or reads.'

For all the erudition, the underlying conception of drama is that of the illiterate playgoer ('And what other point of view are we entitled to take?'). 'The core of tragedy,' the present book begins, 'is situation,' and it is 'the highly effective situation,' the 'effects of terror and surprise' that are stressed throughout. 'Two things above all he sought—a striking situation and a vivid impression of personality.' Professor Stoll's reaction to art is the thrill that comes from seeing 'the struggle of the noble nature in the toils, the magnificent effect.' 'We tremble for Hamlet . . . We are anxious . . .' A discussion conducted in these terms (need one say?) leaves no room for poetry, for all that makes a Shakespeare play a subtly particular emotional experience.

Poetry is indeed mentioned fairly frequently, but the Professor's labyrinthine style is not the only indication that he is not particularly sensitive to it as medium of emotional precision. There were some odd collocations in *Shakespeare Studies*—'Like Browning's, the touch of his hand is like an electric shock; and as with Browning and Dickens both, even the inanimate things

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it touches start and quiver . . . Though greater, Shakespeare is, like Browning, Balzac, Scott, and Dickens, too preoccupied with life to study perfection in art'—and the reference to 'masters like Shakespeare and Beaumont' in the present volume shows complete unawareness of the gulf between them. It was, I believe, Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith who called Professor Stoll 'a hard-boiled critic,' but the conception of poetry displayed by this tough realist is the familiar one of 'magic.' 'We believe, not as convinced, but as enchanted and enthralled.' Poetic effect is indicated by the vaguest gestures,—'He walks not soberly afoot, but flies. And Shakespeare is the greatest of dramatists because the illusion he offers is the widest and highest, the emotion he arouses the most irresistible and overwhelming.' But then, Professor Stoll had already recorded his conviction that Shakespeare 'is far less restricted in his appeal, *less exacting in his demands upon the attention and understanding*, more popular, in short, than Ibsen.'

The defect indicated here is radical; it explains all the other shortcomings. A critic whose sensibility is not minutely controlled by the word is not likely to be aware of the cardinal virtue of precision. *Shakespeare Studies*, one remembers, exhibited an equivocal use of such key-words as 'self-consciousness' and 'technique'; and in *Art and Artifice* it is plain that we are not meant to enquire too deeply into 'the higher reality, the super truth.' Humbler matters, such as 'the identity or continuity of stroke or touch, or of fabric and texture,' might, perhaps, have had a modicum of explanation.

And an undiscriminating response to poetry—to the word—means, inevitably, a conception of drama as 'situation,' and a discussion of it in terms only of general effect. *Hamlet* is 'a story, not of Hamlet's procrastination . . . but of a prolonged and artful struggle between him and the King.' So, for that matter, was the *Ur-Hamlet*. The observation that 'the central mechanism of the dramatic method [in *Macbeth* and *Othello*] lies in the contrast between the hero and his conduct' is not very helpful. What makes the play important as a particular experience, 'so, and not otherwise,' is the poetry. Stoll's words could be applied equally to plays with a similar subject matter written in the blank verse of Dryden. It is without surprise that we find (p. 147) an uncritical coupling of *Antony and Cleopatra* and *All*

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for Love, and (p. 31) evidence of a complete inability to appreciate the significance of *The Wheel of Fire*. According to the criteria that Professor Stoll supplies, a Shakespeare play—a matter of 'situation' or of dramatic contrast—could obtain its *full* effect when acted on the stage. If we dissent from this view it is not from any Lamb-like squeamishness but for the reasons which Dryden prefixed to *The Spanish Friar*: 'For the propriety of thoughts and words, which are hidden beauties of a play, are but confusedly judged in the vehemence of action: all things are there beheld as in a hasty motion, where the objects only glide before the eye and disappear. The most discerning critic can judge no more of these silent graces in the action than he who rides post through an unknown country can distinguish the situation of places, and the nature of the soil . . . In short, those very words and thoughts, which cannot be changed, but for the worse, must of necessity escape our transient view upon the theatre; and yet without all these a play may take.'

In a sense, Professor Stoll deserves a different review from this. A good deal of work remains to be done on Elizabethan dramatic conventions; especially we need an account of the relation of conventional elements and the 'attempt at realism' in particular plays, and we need to know how far conventions were consciously accepted as such. (Mr. Eliot's Note on 'Four Elizabethan Dramatists' has some interesting—though sometimes misleading—suggestions). But Professor Stoll has done the spade-work, and future research might well start from his observation that Shakespeare 'observes not so much the probabilities of the action, or the psychology of the character, as the psychology of the audience.' His books are valuable not only for their account of specific conventions—that of assumed madness, or of the slanderer believed and so on—but for occasional remarks on the general value of a convention to the artist (for example, 'the advantage of not provoking criticism, not arousing resistance'). But, and this explains the direction taken by this review, 'convention' criticism of this kind can never be 'positive.' Its function is the negative one of preventing the entirely misleading approach.

There are, then, many reasons why we should be grateful to Professor Stoll. It remains to add that we are not grateful to

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the Cambridge Press for introducing his work to this country in one of the most dazzling types that we have had the misfortune to read.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

POETRY DIRECT AND OBLIQUE, by E. M. W. Tillyard (Chatto & Windus, 8/6d. net).

' Oblique ' poetry for Dr. Tillyard is any that expresses more than the bare and obvious sense of the words it uses, and its existence has not of course been overlooked in previous critical practice. In Cambridge, for instance, Mr. Forbes has for years been making magnificent analyses of poetry of this kind. But by constructing his book round the distinction between this and ' direct ' poetry Dr. Tillyard really secures two objects. First he is able to write appreciatively of the rather dull mediocre poems of direct statement which are now no longer read for enjoyment, those for which his favourite word of praise is ' solid ' ; secondly, on the ground of illustrating and elucidating obliquity, he can record any ideas that have occurred to him in the course of reading poetry. This latter part of the book contains occasional useful observations on individual poems, together with simple discussions of ' symbolism,' ' plot,' and ' allusion,' and it might have been suitable for introducing students of literature to aspects of recent criticism which have become academically consolidated.

Unfortunately the lack of vitality of the book makes it unsuitable for anyone whose liking for poetry could be damped. The writing is evidently meant to carry you along gently and conversationally, but it remains just flaccid, and interspersing it with ' breath-taking,' ' colossal,' ' a poetic intensity almost unbearable ' and so on does nothing to communicate the enthusiasm Dr. Tillyard says he feels. This feature of the book seems to go naturally with its sympathy for lifeless verse. It may be true, as he claims, that a bulky mass of mediocre verse provides a useful background for better poetry, but the very evident tendency of a book like this is to reinstate that stifling pile of literature which students have

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to learn reasons for respecting. For instance, ' Thin stuff this, but of the soundness we are looking for,' or ' Good poetry of statement this ; solidly wrought . . . .'

This tendency of the book makes it difficult to accept at its face value the air of poised wisdom with which Dr. Tillyard treats recent poetry and criticism ; it seems more like deep-seated conventionality accommodating itself to new ideas just as little as it must. Perhaps it is a hopeful sign that with such evident sympathies for the unenterprising he should have had to accept so much recent opinion.

What is most regrettable about the whole book is its pretentiousness. After dismissing Wilson Knight's kind of Shakespeare criticism, for instance, Dr. Tillyard writes—giving it a paragraph to itself—

> ' I believe that the whole function of character can be assessed much more satisfactorily through the notions of directness and obliquity.'

One can only leave him with his belief, and wonder what his own chapter on character would have been like without the influences that crystallize out in Wilson Knight. This is by no means an isolated instance ; it gives the tone of the whole book. Worst of all, perhaps, is the long discussion of the subject matter of obliquity in which Dr. Tillyard sets about dissection and definition with the air of Dr. Richards ; and produces such notions as ' pure sensibility ' and ' primal joy-melancholy '—emotive pseudo-creation masquerading as exact formulation and revealing only too clearly a lack of the stamina necessary for logical thinking about literature. It seems a pity that Dr. Tillyard could not have confined himself to extending accepted critical ideas to more material ; when he does this, as in dealing with allusion, his painstaking reading often enables him to be helpful. It is when he tries to compete with critics capable of original thought that his book becomes pretentious and must antagonize even readers who agree with the kind of criticism it derives from.

D.W.H.

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IDEALS AND FACTS IN ADULT EDUCATION

ADULT EDUCATION IN PRACTICE, edited by R. Peers (Macmillan, 7/6d.).

ENGLISH IN AUSTRALIA, by E. G. Biaggini, with a Foreword by F. R. Leavis (Oxford University Press, 4/-).

READING AND DISCRIMINATION, by Denys Thompson (Chatto & Windus, 3/6d.).

' Education must aim at developing the abilities of every individual to their fullest capacity. It must at the same time provide each with the knowledge necessary to enable him to live the best life of which he is capable. In relation to society as a whole, it must be the means of perceiving from generation to generation the foundations of knowledge upon which civilization rests ; it must advance the search after new knowledge ; and it must provide in the community the common means of intercourse and understanding. Education must have dynamic as well as a conservative purpose: for if society is so constituted as to deny to a large number of its members opportunities of intellectual advancement, and therefore the prospect of attaining to the good life, it becomes a legitimate aim of educational effort so to modify existing social arrangements as to remove the obstacles which stand in the way of individual development.'

Education is something more than mere schooling—it is only begun in schools, and goes on throughout life. A school has done all that can be expected of it, if it turns out pupils who are trained and equipped for self-education, and who still have some wish to go on learning. When most of the people of this country left school they were not remarkably well-fitted or eager for self-education. Readers of *Scrutiny* hardly need reminding how much they have been ' educated ' since then by films, fiction, and newspapers, and with what unfortunate results. Their capacities as individuals will scarcely be developed to the full unless they can count on more disinterested help. This has been recognized for

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years and a good deal of effort has gone into the many attempts to provide part-time education for the man-in-the-street. *Adult Education in Practice* looks as though it might be the much needed history of these attempts, and a critical account of what is being done to-day. Its editor is Head of the Department of Adult Education at Nottingham University, and his contributors are men of long experience in adult education. Yet it disappoints us—it deals with only certain kinds of adult education, and it side-steps most important issues.

To the Board of Education adult education means non-vocational education for working-men, and this is what it means in Mr. Peers' book. Nothing is said about vocational education and its possibilities ; there is no mention of those unhappy thousands who cram for years in our night-schools for a Matriculation Certificate or a professional diploma (' Education is your best investment ') ; they have no comment for the work sponsored by the Rural Industries Board, and the significance of the great post-war increase in classes for physical training, country-dancing, housewifery, drama, and music- and art-appreciation seems to have escaped them. We are not told why the organizations described in this book limit themselves to a ' liberal ' education that in practice cannot be very liberal. (For working-men any thorough study of the classics or of foreign literature is out of the question, and how many working-men have a mathematical training good enough to make them serious students of the sciences—even if laboratories were available?) A liberal education may be the best education for the English worker. It may even be the *only* education possible. This seems to be assumed, at any rate, in *Adult Education in Practice*. Others, thinking, perhaps, of the D.I.A., or of Soviet schools, or of Mr. Eric Gill's views on handicrafts and culture, may find this assumption too much for them. While the general principles (we quoted them to begin with) are sound enough, practice hardly squares with them, and as things are, cannot square with them. Before we get an educated working-class ' existing social arrangements ' will have to be changed considerably. The contributors know this, and know that what is being done now is done in face of powerful opposition. They know it, but will not discuss it—' theirs not to reason why '—not in public at any rate, and this, despite the fact that one section

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is given up to a history of the various efforts to provide for workers' education. They even avoid discussing the merits of English methods in comparison with those abroad—is it after all such a cause for self-congratulation that in other countries there is no counterpart to the W.E.A. Tutorial Class?

They make a better job of compiling information that ought to have been available in a handy book of reference instead of being scattered in reports, pamphlets and journals. Their book will serve as a summary guide to the growth, constitution, and administration of bodies like the W.E.A., the National Labour Colleges, the Y.M.C.A., etc. It details the part played in the affairs of each by the Board of Education, the Universities, the Rural Community Councils, the local education authorities and the trade-unions ; it gives some indication of the kind of work attempted—from pioneer talks on place-names to University Extension Lectures, Tutorial Classes, Summer Schools, and Residential Colleges ; it includes statistics (far from complete) of students, their ages, their occupations and the subjects they study, and a list of bodies offering facilities for adult education. It also carries, in appendices, Board of Education regulations, information about scholarships, bursaries, and residential colleges, and a selected list of books, pamphlets, reports, and journals. There is still more pure information—on the work of pioneer tutors and how they may co-operate with Rural Community Boards, Extra-Mural Departments, etc., and on the supply of books available from local and county Libraries, from Headquarters and from the Central Library for Students.

Mr. Peers aimed at providing something more than a summary reference book, however. He hoped to be of use to prospective tutors and lecturers, and so several chapters are given up to general advice about students and their needs, the standard of work expected from them and the kind of tutor who succeeds. The exacting reader who wants to find out what is actually being done, and what is possible, instead of what might be done in perfect conditions, will find these chapters irritating.

' The great achievement of the Workers' Educational Association is the Three Year Tutorial Class . . .—the pinnacle of effort in part-time adult education.' The Board of Education stipulates that the work done in a Tutorial Class shall approximate in quality

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to that done for a University Honours Course, and the editor goes a good deal further: ' adult education must concern itself ultimately with the relationships between different branches of knowledge, and with the significance of the whole for the larger purposes of life '—the wagon is hitched to the star and no mistake. That of course is as it should be, but we are left to guess whether the fine aspirations can ever be realized. Most tutors will know how impossible the hope is. Classes vary surprisingly in quality it is true—some of them are made up of men and women who have been through secondary schools, but the bulk of W.E.A. students left school before they were fourteen. Far too many of them have a poor command of words ; they are inarticulate in class and on paper, and as readers quite uncritical. In George Sampson's words, they can neither make nor appreciate concise, correct, lucid, intelligent statements. They cannot find information for themselves in libraries, newspapers, records or museums ; they are usually poor judges of what constitutes evidence ; and they are incapable of intensive reading for any length of time (so, for that matter, are most undergraduates). You begin them in a One Year Preparatory Class, equipping them with the elementary tools of the student, getting them to speak and write reasonably well. In twenty-four two-hour meetings you must contrive to get them ready for a course that will approximate in quality to Honours work (six years' steady work in a secondary school is usually needed, and even then two-thirds of your secondary school pupils would be rejected by any University). Seventy per cent. of your students will be over thirty years old ; that's why they learn so quickly—mature men and women schooled in the university of life, you know. To their cost tutors find that their schooling has been very largely in the hands of film-magnates, popular novelists, politicians, and interested manufacturers like the brewers who spend huge sums in ' educating ' us into a liking for beer. They have to struggle with rooted prejudices, erroneous ideas, false impressions. They have to goad into individual thinking people disinclined to think things out for themselves, people who hanker like most of us after notes, catch-words, critical foot-rules and the right opinion. Time and energy are limited—they are workers, parents, citizens, as well as students ; people who must study in crowded houses without the resources of a University Library

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to help them or the lively conversation of a dozen fellow-students. A ' tabloid ' education sometimes seems unavoidable. As tutor of course you must never admit it. You go down from Oxford or Liverpool every week to a suburb in Birmingham or a village in a remote Derbyshire dale, and there you meet twenty people varying in age, ability, training, tastes and hopes, but all of them pretty well tongue-tied. Whilst gradually teaching them the a-b-c of writing, reading and discussion, and getting them to like you, you have to persuade, cajole and bully them into systematic study at home, get them to make notes and to write essays once a fortnight or so. You must make serious work so fascinating that they come week after week with growing enthusiasm (you can't afford to lose any students ; every student who completes the course earns the W.E.A. a grant from the Board of Education, and so you must learn to carry on with eight or ten apathetic make-weights hindering your dozen serious students).

Even in these conditions good work (perhaps you're surprised) is done, and quite often too. But if any advance is made it will come only through recognizing how difficult conditions are, how much needs to be done, how little is to be expected. Good intentions and noble aspirations are well enough in their place, but are no substitute for an honest examination of what happens in practice. Without the evidence that a critical report would give they merely serve to mislead ; prospective tutor and general reader should know that *Adult Education in Practice* is not as helpful as it sets out to be. Here, for instance, is Mr. Rich telling us not what kind of discussion to expect from the students we have described, but the kind of discussion every tutor dreams of getting:

> ' It must be remembered that in many subjects the students can make a definite contribution from their own experience of life, and that in this they may have the advantage over the tutor himself. Class discussion is, therefore, essentially a co-operative enterprise. The questioning of the tutor by individual students has a place in the tutorial method, but it is not class discussion. Nor is discussion a series of isolated speeches by individual students on different topics, with a short speech by the tutor interlarded between each . . . A good discussion resembles rather a beautifully woven fabric of clear design, in the

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making of which the tutor may arrange the different strands, rather than provide them himself . . . '

A supervisor may hope to have this kind of discussion with two or three of his best pupils (but even then not often)—but to get it with a team of twenty! Yes, ' such a task demands the clearest mind, the most delicate tact and sympathy, and the most skilful team management'. O fortunate W.E.A. to have such minds at its service!

One more example of the same kind of thing:

' . . . the individual approach is of fundamental importance in all branches of adult education. The modern tendency in all forms of education is to stress the necessity of developing the individual as an individual, not merely as a fraction of an educational group. The centre of gravity is placed in the living, active pupil rather than in the subject taught, and this attitude clearly implies that the teacher must seek to know his individual pupils as closely as he knows the subjects he professes to teach.'

Excellent advice, of course, but how do you get an intimate knowledge of twenty-four strangers in a far-away town visited once a week for a couple of hours? Something you can learn from the little paragraphs turned up as essays, something from the fragmentary discussions, something from comments made over the book-box, something in the twenty minutes spent hanging about before catching 'bus or train—you will make the most of your opportunities, of course, but to know them ' as closely as you know your subject! ' You smile and sigh, and then turn to Mr. Stanners who tells you how to get over your difficulty. How is it done? It seems you organize rambles, picnics, museum tours, and go in a body to inspect jam-works or engineering shops, or you spend three or four weeks at a Summer School. All this may be useful, but it clearly implies that tutoring is a full-time job for a man on the spot—and so it ought to be. Every community should have its tutors and classes. This would mean radical changes in organization and method, more tutors, more classes, more working-class interest, more money, and to discuss the matter at all adequately would involve Mr. Stanners in radical criticism

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of the present system. Radical criticism is just what is most avoided in this book, however.

Mr. Biaggini is made of different stuff. His study is detailed and sober, his criticism severe, and his suggestions practical. He wanted to find out the natural qualities of students' minds and was dissatisfied with the usual type of examination. So he devised tests of his own, tests that are very similar to Miss Margaret Bulley's in method. He confronted his students ' with two or more unsigned passages [of prose], of which one is much better, or worse, than the other, or others ' and asked them to make their choice and to give reasons for choosing as they did. He gave his set of tests over a period of four years to several groups of students, and has carefully analysed the results he got. Though he tested undergraduates and schoolboys he is most concerned with the work of the teachers-in-training at Adelaide University, and of his own students (these were Commerce Students at Adelaide University, who, having failed to pass in English in their school-leaving examinations, had to come to Mr. Biaggini for a two-year course in English literature and composition).

These two groups of students are fairly representative of the man-in-the-street, rather above the average than below it, and from his experience with them Mr. Biaggini is able to generalize more soundly than most people about the intelligence and culture of the average man. He tested every year about thirty-four teachers-in-training, and about forty first-year and forty second-year Commerce Students, so that his sampling of the average man can be trusted. His tests are simple, and their correct solution does not call for much literary ability—' in fact, as a rule, the choice to be made is between very bad and very good literature, or between very false and very good sentiment, or even between sense and nonsense.' Mr. Biaggini presents the results methodically. Every chapter is headed with a test; then follows an analytical table of the voting, a selection of students' opinions (edited with great scrupulousness and full enough to weary the most exacting reader) and finally Mr. Biaggini's own critical judgment of the passages under discussion.

Ability to distinguish between false and true sentiment, or between sense and nonsense were far from common, and the quality of mind and sensibility revealed must have depressed Mr. Biaggini

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beyond words. He feels that the evidence given will be regarded as a grave reflection on local culture. It is. But after the revelations in *Practical Criticism* we in England are not so surprised as Mr. Biaggini fears. Yet he was right to find this evidence disturbing. As a teacher, and particularly as a teacher of English, he felt some responsibility for the state of local culture. He determined to find out why the results were so poor, and whether something could be done to improve matters.

Is English taught as well as it might be, he asks ; are students encouraged to think for themselves, to read critically and arrive at personal estimates of literary merit, and can they give convincing reasons for having arrived at their conclusions, or are they encouraged to repeat the right, the safe, the conventional verdicts that lecturers and teachers hand out to them? Do they regard literary criticism as a vital activity or as a social patter kept up as part of a larger ritual? Do they think literature is just part of the baggage they load up to get through an examination safely, or is it seen as a means towards finer living? Have they to show recognizable signs of literary sensibility before they are drafted into advanced classes or is everyone who comes along milled through literature courses? Mr. Biaggini's questions are searching. The answers he is compelled to give indicate that a good deal of blame must be taken by the teachers of English.

As a teacher Mr. Biaggini was most effective. His second-year students are far less gullible, far more discriminating than his new students, and indeed a great deal can be done to train sensibility as well as to test it. Yet he is too honest to suggest that better teaching is all that we need. He recognizes that ' the ways of thought and feeling illustrated in his students' protocols run deep in the ordinary mind and are continually nourished there by prevailing social influences'. Schools, colleges and universities are not society itself, they are part of society and inevitably take their tone from the whole. The schoolmaster must do all he can to preserve whatever is best and whatever is most alive in society—he must make students critical enough to recognize the best, but he cannot impose a culture that is alien to contemporary ways of living, though he is tempted to forget this.

Mr. Biaggini's general proposal will scarcely surprise readers of *Scrutiny*. Most people are unlikely to benefit from any intensive

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study of literature ; they simply lack sensibility. To attempt mass-education in literature is to make trouble ; it merely results in a widespread dislike of literature. A training in writing and speaking so that every man can express himself easily and cogently is, of course, essential, and every man should be given enough critical training to protect himself against most exploiters of public gullibility and sentimentality. The exercises in *English in Australia* are not adequate for this task, but offer a start that is promising (if only all our English teachers had Mr. Biaggini's ability to say just where and why a piece of writing is good or bad!) Beyond this only a few picked minds should go. They would be few enough to get the attention they deserve, and they might become a minority sufficiently intelligent, responsible, and well-informed to lead. ' It is upon exceptional and not mediocre minds that the maintenance and improvement of our standards depend.' We must, in fact, ' cherish the able, and pay fitting, if not slavish, respect to authority'.

Mr. Biaggini believes that the plight indicated by the evidence he presents must be common knowledge to the wide-awake and honest. He is properly indignant that with this evidence everywhere to hand we do not attempt to act. We lack the will not the means to preserve what makes our civilization worth preserving, and the creation of the will is a moral process. Mr. Biaggini writes as a moralist from a deep sense of social responsibility. It is a pleasure to pay tribute to his honesty, his courage, and his resourcefulness. *English in Australia* is a book that should move many readers into taking responsible action. We commend it in particular to the notice of the contributors to *Adult Education in Practice*.

Reading and Discrimination derives (as Mr. Thompson states) from

How To Teach Reading, by F. R. Leavis.
Practical Criticism, by I. A. Richards.
Seven Types of Ambiguity, by W. Empson.
The Problem of Style, by J. Middleton Murry.
Fiction and the Reading Public, by Q. D. Leavis.
Towards Standards of Criticism

and in effect is a set of critical exercises designed as a supplement to these books. Its exercises, expounded rather cursorily in the

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author's commentary, should help us to become more critical in our reading, readier to recognize clap-trap, uplift, sentimentality and pretentiousness wherever they appear, whether in periodical essays, anthology poetry, politicians' speeches, novels, or literary criticism. As the epigraph reminds us, ' No man can embrace True Art until he has Explored and cast out False Art '. Guided rather impatiently

('—no time for ling-
-ering ')

by the author we find ourselves exploring false art and learning to recognize it for what it is. Its badness is made apparent by placing it in sharp contrast to what is unmistakably good—the method of Margaret Bulley and Biaggini (and, of course, Hamlet—' Look here, upon this picture, and on this—'). Mr. Thompson has an advantage over Mr. Biaggini in that he can (for his very different purpose) use a so much better equipment of critical theory and can give us exercises that introduce us to most of the topics discussed in *Practical Criticism* and *How to Teach Reading*: the four kinds of meaning, rhythm, imagery, sentimentality, stock-responses, the ' poetic ' and the importance of speech-idiom to a writer.

Our taste in literature is not unconnected with the quality of our living, and a mind trained to make first-hand judgments in literature will not be led by the nose by the makers of mass-opinion. The English master has great responsibilities and great opportunities then. Mr. Thompson is anxious to take every opportunity he can get, sometimes a little over-anxious (the tone of his commentary doesn't compare well with Mr. Biaggini's) ; indoctrination is just round the corner. Indoctrination you may say is unavoidable but still we are uneasy—how much social history and economics do his fifth formers know, and can Mr. Thompson be trusted as a social historian? (is he naïve enough to think the prose-style of a Minister's public speech is an indication of the Minister's ability as a *statesman*?) If he, and every other English master could count on active support from historians and economists, and had an able sociologist at hand to correct his wilder surmises! The solitary English master must waste his energies on matters not strictly within his province. All that Mr. Thompson

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would like to do through his exercises will never be done without intelligent help from other masters. Something might be done to enlist their support? Can we persuade Mr. Thompson into making a sober study as detailed and as scrupulously honest as *English in Australia* of the year's work in English with his fifth form (with other forms, too, by all means!)? Such a study would demonstrate convincingly how pervasive and powerful are those influences he so much deplores, how much needs to be done to counter-act them, how, and where, other masters could help, and what degree of success may be expected. It should lead to the devising of greatly improved teaching-methods, and possibly, to modifications in critical theory. It seems quite an essential preliminary to the writing of those exciting text-books that could be written for boys of ten to sixteen. And it might bring home to a wider public how far from crankiness a book like *Culture and Environment* (in which it will be remembered Mr. Thompson was a collaborator) really is.

W. A. EDWARDS.

ENGLISH STUDIES IN THE W.E.A.

Mr. H. L. Elvin, Treasurer, Eastern District Workers' Educational Association, asks us to correct the impression, which he thinks may have been given by the final paragraph of *Fleet Street and Pierian Roses* in our last number, that ' a contempt for English studies, as of less utility than others, is an all but prevailing sentiment ' in the W.E.A. We are glad to have his assurances that this is not so and that there are more W.E.A. classes in English literature than in any other subject.

Our contributors' reference was not in fact to the W.E.A., nor was it intended to suggest ' an all but prevailing sentiment ' within any organization. The motion referred to was regarded by our contributor simply as a straw in the wind, and as providing a significant contrast with what is and is not possible, culturally, in France.

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HOW SHALL WE TEACH?

PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS, THEIR PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE, by L. B. Pekin (The Hogarth Press, 6/-).

Teachers, as contrasted with educationists, are generally more interested in means than ends in their profession. This is not solely due to apathy but frequently to the realization that ultimately the former are apt to matter more than the latter. It seems, that is, progressively less important what you teach, and more so, how you teach. It is unlikely, for instance, that any really cultural education could be provided in a school whose whole organization and trend, as in most, were actively hostile to such an end, no matter what the procedure in class. To give a concrete example, adopting methods such as suggested by Mr. Thompson in the last number of *Scrutiny* and in *Reading and Discrimination*, would, although immensely valuable in a school where independence of judgment was encouraged, merely end, in most schools, in the class getting to know the master's particular literary prejudices and enthusiasms. I know that this is only another way of saying that the relation between teacher and taught is the consideration that overrides and undermines any conception of teaching, but whereas most writers on education content themselves with dragging it in like a sort of doxology in their concluding paragraph without daring to examine its implications, Mr. Pekin has made it the central theme of his whole case.

As a result he is not concerned with the latest dodge for teaching Pythagoras or the advantages of the Direct Method, but rather, as I have said, in what respective frames of mind the teacher and his class meet both in and out of school. He has a hatred, with which it is impossible not to sympathize, of the prevailing code in this matter.

'There exist side by side in the same institution two classes of human beings, masters and boys, who must constantly meet day after day over a space of about five years. During the whole of this time the masters are expected to show "dignity" and the boys "respect." Dignity consists in dressing up in foolish-looking

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clothes, attending chapel regularly, pretending to know a great deal more about life than anyone does in fact know, calling children by their surnames and thrashing them from time to time. Respect consists in raising the hat constantly to middle-aged men who may have done little or nothing to merit even this small attention, addressing them as Sir to their faces (while reserving other and often less printable names for them as soon as they have passed out of hearing), carrying out their commands however stupid these may be—and not uncommonly are—and in general assuming a meek kind of innocence that one is very far from possessing. The situation is of course quite intolerable . . . ' It is ; but few seem to mind and fewer still can be got to realize that all idea of education is impossible in such an environment.

Everything else in his book is really grouped round this. Chapters on the various aspects of life in a progressive boarding school mainly illustrate how the necessary change in environment and attitude can be and is being carried out. The chapter on co-education is, incidentally, by far the best which I have ever seen on the subject, another which ' serious ' educationists enjoy overlooking.

There are only two possible objections which I can see to the book. One is an apparent assumption that the public school is the only alternative to the type of school here advocated. This charge is interesting because it seems so little realized how far the public-school attitude has penetrated into the whole educational system of the country. I am convinced that there is more real similarity between, say, Westminster and an elementary school round the corner than between the former and Dartington. The same distinguishing marks can be observed in nearly all state and private schools alike, and the ideal an ' English-Gentleman-and-a-Good-Sport ' becomes something fantastic when held up to boys whose parents are on the dole. Until we can get rid of that senseless worship of ' knowledge ' (in most cases mere academic lumber) and that continual effort on the part of the adult to make the child conform to a moral standard that is certainly not natural to him and which is in any case highly questionable, genuine education is impossible.

About all this Mr. Pekin is admirably decisive. It is only the second possible objection which seems to call for some criticism.

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Whilst partly aware of the situation he does not seem nearly ready enough to scrape off some of the barnacles which have gathered on so much modern education. I mean by this the various incitements to a Higher Life reminiscent of Hampstead Garden Suburb. A. S. Neil's scorn for what he calls the 'Higher Thought' school is probably caused far less by an anti-intellectual bias than by a realization that to bring a child up on a philosophy or a belief which he has no chance of equating with his own experience is not going to assist that child when, as undoubtedly will happen sooner or later, he perceives the discrepancy. I confess that I cannot see the difference between bringing up a child to attend church regularly and to be, say, a good vegetarian. This sort of thing is a pity as it makes it very hard sometimes to persuade hesitating parents to decide on a progressive school, and it is possibly the chief merit of this book that otherwise it is likely to accomplish this quicker than anything else that I know. It has all the merits of good propaganda, being extremely readable and frequently very amusing yet decisive and practical. It should be lent indiscriminately.

There is one thing left to add. The title is misleading. It is not and could not hope to be, a complete account of the principles and practice of a group containing schools so different as Bedales and Summerhill. It is more valuable for what it is, a personal declaration of unusual sincerity and intelligence.

ERIC CAPON.

ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW.

A large part of this book is taken up by just if obvious criticism of one kind of public school. Here I think Mr. Pekin generalizes too readily ; see the long quotation in the review above, though the rather childish manner of that extract is not representative of Mr. Pekin's tone—if he wears blinkers in surveying public schools, he is refreshingly aware of some common drawbacks in progressive schools—the religion of anti-religion, for instance. The most serious objection to his book is the lack of any convincing statement about the positive programme of the progressive schools. He rightly pillories the notorious vices of the older institutions, and shows that they are avoided in the schools he favours. The latter are

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places where children can be happy, and they afford greater scope to good teaching. But he does not indicate any school with a positive educational bias. When you've remedied homosexualism by co-education, and abolished O.T.C.s, compulsory chapel, punishments, games and other stupidities, you've reached a good starting point, without providing a good education. Even in the certain corruption of the public schools, something in this last direction can be attempted.

At this point, propagandists for this or that establisment will interrupt—' Well, if Bunbury isn't educational, I don't know what is.' One answer would be to define education, another is that the progressive schools don't produce intelligent adults in any greater proportion than the public schools. The reason for this is, that until the progressive schools are more consciously orientated, what sort of education you get will depend largely upon accident—the personnel of the staff. There are not enough adults on any school staff. Meanwhile we can't wait for the growth of more good schools, but must try to produce adults in whatever schools we have at the moment. Neither the progressive nor the public schools (together accounting at most for about 2 per cent of the school population?) have a monopoly of intelligent children. Mr. Capon's criticism in the centre of his first paragraph is just ; but there again a small leavening of the staff in quite a stupid school may surprisingly alter its atmosphere—especially if the attack can be made in two branches of the teaching thereat. Good teaching will not then be suspect as ' crank,' and it may even palliate the cankers diagnosed by Mr. Pekin. But that suggestion can't be explored now.

The function of education is not adequately conceived in this book, even by implication. I had hoped for some account of what special schools have to contribute to the solution of our besetting problems, but there are few hints. Expectations are aroused on page 48, where in criticizing the ' leave-them-alone ' school of educationists, he comments:

> ' This theory appears to me to be open to another serious objection: it is playing fast and loose with the acquired spiritual experience of the race, and for that reason must be held to be psychologically dangerous. I mean nothing very obscure by this: I mean simply that it is impossible to make a clean break

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> with the inherited traditions of the past, to throw overboard the slowly husbanded and laboriously garnered notions of one's ancestors. You cannot with impunity flout the cultural continuity of your race.'

But there is no development of this theme in its relation to education, no mention of any school conscious of its responsibilities here.

He devotes much space to another issue which is important, the relations between staff and children. At the risk of misunderstanding, I will say that his criticism (see Mr. Capon's extract again) is superficial: he would better have said not that dignity and respect are undesirable in themselves, but that most school staffs don't deserve respect, because being inadequate and insensitive persons they have no dignity. Again, this needs enlarging on. Mr. Pekin envisages a staff which spends much of its time with the children. The view of Mr. Bertrand Russell is preferable; in the *New Statesman* for May 5th he says (if I do not misquote him) that teachers should have a liking for their children, and that this liking cannot be preserved in schools where the teaching staff have more than two or three hours' contact a day with their pupils.

D.T.

AN ATLAS OF CURRENT AFFAIRS, by J. F. Horrabin (Gollancz, 3/6d.).

Mr. Horrabin has drawn seventy-four of his telling sketch-maps for this atlas and supplemented them with short and lucid explanatory paragraphs. Each map illustrates one of the main political or economic problems of the world to-day, and the maps dealing with the Far East are particularly illuminating. 'The intelligent newspaper reader' for whom this little atlas is intended will find it helpful in understanding strategic and economic conflicts in the news of the day, and it will remind him of others which at the moment are not receiving the attention of his daily paper. Teachers and others who wish to arouse interest in current affairs should find a ready use for the material and method of this book.

J.B.P.

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ECONOMICS FOR THE UNINFORMED

THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S REVIEW OF EUROPE TO-DAY, by G. D. H. Cole and Margaret Cole (Gollancz. 1933. 5/-).

THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S GUIDE THROUGH WORLD CHAOS, by G. D. H. Cole (Gollancz. 1932. 5/-).

WHAT EVERYBODY WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT MONEY, by Nine Economists from Oxford. Edited by G. D. H. Cole (Gollancz. 1933. 5/-).

THE ECONOMICS OF HUMAN HAPPINESS, by Collin Brooks (Routledge. 1933. 10/6d.).

THE WAGGONER ON THE FOOTPLATE, by Lionel Birch (Heffer. 1933. 4/6d.).

Of Victor Riquetti, Marquis de Mirabeau, friend of mankind and inventor of the omnibus volume in economics, it has been said that if his hand had been of bronze it would have been quite worn out with writing. But he wrote before the days of the dictaphone, and no such calamity need be feared for our 20th century Ami des Hommes, the indefatigable Mr. G. D. H. Cole, who, not content with his earlier kinds of literary achievement, has recently adopted a more comprehensive form of exposition with the design of guiding men of intelligence and good-will through the labyrinth of current economic and political problems. To say, as his publishers do, using the cookery-book permissive subjunctive, that the works ' may be read like detective stories ' is scarcely fair to Mr. Cole's contributions to that companion branch of literature. But they can certainly be read without undue strain and, what is even more important, without previous possession of much technical knowledge.

The least satisfactory of the three members of this Hiawatha series at present under review is that on European conditions. Unlike the other two it reads as if it had been written in haste. And it is encyclopædian rather than encyclopædic. The intelligent man who has conscientiously read and marked its outline of European history, its condensed European geography, its tabloid discussion of European economics, and its still more concentrated

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analysis of European politics, is more than likely to have serious difficulty with the process of inward digestion before he is able to profit even from such a lucid exposition of the European outlook as that with which Mr. Cole completes his *Review*.

The *Guide Through World Chaos* is a more assimilable, indeed an almost pre-digested, product. 'I am not writing for economics students, but for all intelligent people who can be persuaded to read my book,' says Mr. Cole in his preface; 'I have tried throughout to be as simple as possible, and have left out all abstruse and difficult discussions that are not absolutely vital to an understanding of *immediate* problems.' That, of course, is the difficulty; there are so many abstruse discussions in economics that have very little apparent bearing on immediate problems until an attempt is made to solve the problems without them. Perhaps the best chapters in Mr. Cole's attempt are those that are in fact, but unobtrusively, based on quite difficult pieces of analysis of which the results only (in axiomatic form) are allowed to tax the brain of the reader. Such, in particular, are the introductory chapters. Some of the more specialized arguments that follow, where actual fragments of analysis are also exhibited, even if judged as 'descriptive economics' only, are not so satisfactory.

What Everybody Wants to Know About Money is likewise intended for the general reader. Mr. Cole has written four of its twelve chapters and 'planned and edited' the rest, and internal evidence would suggest that the planning has been fairly detailed and thorough. In many ways this book is likely to be the most useful of the three, but also, perhaps, the most dangerous, for it has their worst fault in the most marked degree: the indiscriminate juxtaposition of plan and fact and theory which appears to be inevitable in works of this sort, and which Mr. Cole has clearly tried to eliminate so far as this could be done without abandoning his intention not only of diagnosing a disease but also of prescribing a remedy.

Books like those of Mr. Brooks and Mr. Birch are clearly sent to us to demonstrate the value, even in a world of intelligent men, of such patient labour as that devoted by Mr. H. Gaitskell in the above volume to the dissection and annihilation of the fairly patent absurdities of Major Douglas and other 'monetary heretics.' Mr. Brooks in his 'loose treatise on how to be happy

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though civilized,' and Mr. Birch in his ' attempt to scrutinize post-war civilization in England ' are both bothered about that ' paradox ' of ' scarcity in an age of plenty ' which, being based upon a picturesquely unscientific definition of its two major items, has recently attracted so much attention in literary and theological circles. Both writers seek a resolution of this paradox partly in the realm of psycho-analysis and partly in that of a pre-Classical objectivist economics. In the former of these quests it would be an impertinence for an economist to follow them ; in the latter, an impossibility. The only recommendation of Mr. Brook's *jeu d'esprit* is the novelty of his style ; the only recommendation of Mr. Birch's, the earnestness of its tone.

If Mr. Cole and his loyal collaborators had no more serious opponents than these, they would have an easy task in converting the intelligent man, if we can suppose that any really intelligent man would need such conversion. But there are weightier considerations against Mr. Cole's proposals ; considerations which clash rather with his premises than with his analysis. This, of course, is merely another illustration of the general argument for separating valuation from ratiocination. The economic and political millenium which Mr. Cole anticipates will be all the nearer when we are able to argue about our logical propositions and get them settled, and then quite undisguisedly decide our differences in the field of values in the only way in which they can be settled—irrationally.

H. E. BATSON.

MODERN MAN IN SEARCH OF A SOUL, by C. G. Jung (Kegan Paul, 10/6d. net).

With Jung as guide the search was bound to be more interesting than the soul. The soul looks like being the collective unconscious which is restoring the balance against conscious Americanization by fishing up the East that lies hidden in us all ; it is peeping out in Theosophy, Spiritualism, Christian Science. But the collection of more or less unrelated papers which the book consists of covers a variety of topics that will enchant admirers of Jung—poetry and the poetic mind, primitive man and

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the deep wisdom of his superstitions, the stages of life and the need to take ' culture ' as age creeps on, the errors of Freud, and so on.

Jung is undoubtedly sensitive at points where many psychologists are calloused: he sees the hopelessness of taking ' normality ' as a goal for the patient in psycho-analysis ; he is critical of the cheerful materialistic assumptions that shield psychologists from some of their difficulties ; he sees the need for what he calls religion ; he has much that is true to say about artists. But he is so vague and unscientific—his tone is something between the conversational and the oracular—that he adds little to what we have probably felt for ourselves. At times, when he is saying something rather obvious or closer to earth than usual, he gets a comic effect by coming out with profuse apologies for having to be incautious and speculative for once. You can't help feeling that a book like this, exhibiting all the writer's more attractive intuitions without submitting them to logical discipline, is a self-indulgence.

D.W.H.

The Henry James number of the *Hound and Horn* (April-June) should not be missed ($1). Edmund Wilson on *The Ambiguity of James* is particularly worth attention.

In the second number of *The New Frontier* (April, 1934), ' Thoughts After Flexner ' by Brooks Otis raises issues we are intending to deal with under the heading *Why Universities ?* ($2.60 a year: c/o Charles J. Hines, 40 East 66th Street, New York City).

For future publication :

THE RELIGION OF PROGRESS - - J. L. RUSSELL

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS - - L. C. KNIGHTS

WORDSWORTH - - - - - - - F. R. LEAVIS

THE HIGHER JOURNALISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY - DENYS THOMPSON

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